

# THE Saturday Journal

A POPULAR PAPER

WEEKLY

PLEASURE & PROFIT

Vol. II.

E. F. Beadle, William Adams, David Adams, PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 25, 1871.

TERMS IN ADVANCE: One copy, four months, \$1.00. One copy, one year, \$2.00. Two copies, one year, \$3.00.

No. 89.

## SPEAK OF ME KINDLY.

BY TOM GOULD.

Oh, think of me often, I pray you,  
When others shall seem to forget;  
And I will as often repay you  
With hours of silent regret.  
Though others may talk of me blindly,  
Grieve not for the shadow I've cast,  
But think of me—speak of me kindly,  
And strive to forgive me the past.

When others shall ask for a painting,  
Oh, tell them the truth as it is:  
But color it not with a fainting  
Of faults that are blacker than his.  
Oh, then may the future repay you,  
And though it may seem such a task,  
Oh, speak of me kindly, I pray you—  
'Tis all that I ever shall ask.

I would that the zephyrs of evening  
Might bring me some knowledge of thee,  
Thine welcome would be every tidings  
That came from your lips into me.  
Oh, would that the fairies might soften  
Their voices, in whispers to say—  
'She thinks of thee—thinks of thee often,  
'She speaks of thee kindly to-day.'

'Tis dreary this wide separation,  
Oh, let not your answer be nay!  
The past—'tis beyond separation,  
Oh, speak of me kindly, I pray.

## The Dark Secret: OR, The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON,  
(MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING.)

### CHAPTER V.

JACK DE VÈRE.

"A thing all lightness, life and glee—  
One of the shapes we seem  
To see in visions of the night,  
And should they greet our waking sight  
Imagine that we dream."—HILL.

CAPTAIN ALFRED DISBROWE had raised his handsome eyes, expecting to see a tall, dashing, whiskered, devil-may-care six-footer; but looking up he saw nothing! until he lowered his eyes, and lowered them again, and at last they alighted on a coquettish little riding-hat, perched jauntily on one side of a little head, some four feet or so from the ground.

Captain Disbrowe started and stared; and his stare was returned by the brightest and clearest pair of eyes that ever were set in a human head—returned with compound interest, too. Jack De Vere was a girl—a small, slight, delicate-looking girl, of seemingly not more than sixteen, and most elegantly and becomingly dressed, who, after her first brief scrutiny, bowed and smiled, and held out her hand, and gracefully welcomed her English cousin to Fontelle Hall.

It was seldom the self-possessed, courteous Captain Disbrowe was at a loss; but for a moment he was really so now, and as he mechanically took the hand she offered, he gazed first at her and then at Frank, so evidently nonplussed, that Frank, who happened to be blessed with a lively sense of the ludicrous, laughed uproariously.

"Jack De Vere," he repeated, like one in a dream.

The young lady withdrew her hand and smiled.

"This is some of your work, Master Frank, with your Jack De Vere! My name is Jacquetta," said she, turning to Disbrowe, "which they have the barbarous taste to transform into Jack—thinking, I suppose, a boy's name suits me best. Whether they are right or not, I must leave it to time and your good sense to decide."

"Oh! beg pardon! I see it all now," said Disbrowe; and the next instant he had sprung from his horse, and stood with his hat off before her. "I fear I have appeared rather rude; but I was so surprised! Allow me to redeem my error, and salute my fair cousin now."

And taking her hand, he would have suited the action to the word; but Miss Jack drew back, and interposed the other hand as a shield.

"Palm to palm is holy palmer's kiss," she said, coolly. "And I, as a staunch Yankee girl and patriot, have vowed a vow; ever since the war, of eternal enmity against all Englishmen. So, my very dear cousin, you will have to admire me at a distance, until better acquainted."

"Then permit me," And he raised her hand gallantly to his lips. "I shall try to induce you to break that cruel vow before we part. The sins of a whole nation should not be visited on one individual head!"

Though he had bent over the hand he held while speaking, he had been looking intently in her face, and trying to decide, strange as it may seem, whether she were pretty or plain.

It was a question that had puzzled others before him, and countless were the different decisions that had been pronounced on the matter. He saw a small, bright, animated face, full of energy, daring and determination, yet fair and delicate as a tinted rose in complexion. Her eyes were large and intensely bright, and of the deepest, darkest gray, sparkling and flashing when she was excited, until they seemed of midnight blackness. Her round, white, polished forehead, and small erect head, were beautifully shaped, and bespoke a strong, energetic, far-seeing brain within. Her small, rosy mouth would have been perfect, but for the half-mocking, half-sarcastic curl of the short upper lip, whose haughty curve bespoke a pride as high and strong as his own—in a different way. But the look of half-mockery seemed the prevailing expression of the piquant, sparkling little face, whose irregular features owed their chief beauty to their constant animation. Her look of mingled seriousness and mockery it was that so puzzled and half annoyed Dis-



"I must and will have a word with that young lady there!" and she pointed to Augusta.

browe, and left him, as it did every one else, at a loss to tell whether she was in jest or in earnest. Her hair was soft, silky and beautiful, and hung in clustering, dancing curls around her bewitching little face; but it was not, uncomplainingly, defiant red, and no fiction of friends or lovers could make it Auburn. And now it flashed and scintillated like wings of flame in the radiant sunshine.

There was something else about Jack De Vere that puzzled and perplexed Disbrowe not a little; and that was, her strong and undefinable resemblance to some one he had met before—who, at that moment, he could not remember. There she stood before him, cool, bright, breezy, airy, and unmistakably fair, reminding him of a sunny day—a very sunny day—yet with the air and grace of a lady withal.

From all he had heard of her, Captain Disbrowe judged she must be an Amazon, a romp, a hoyden—the horror and abomination of the refined, fastidious Englishman. Accustomed to the cold hauteur and high-bred elegance of the ladies and peeresses of his native land, he shrunk in horror from any thing like hoydenism; and an Amazon would have been looked upon by him in about the same way as he would have looked upon a grizzly bear or the great serpent—as something to gaze and shudder at, at a distance. The light, fragile figure, and fair, delicate face of this young girl seemed, though, to contradict the idea that she could be one of these monsters; but from all he had heard of her from Frank, it left him to infer that she was, and that he must not judge by appearances. Then, too, she had red hair, which he detested as betokening vulgarity and a fiery temper—two revolting things, according to his high and spirituelle notions of the adorable sex; and she bore a boy's name, which was another shock to his particular and fastidious taste. And so altogether, in the very few minutes that he stood watching her, he made up his mind, quite to his own satisfaction, to dislike Jack De Vere, and only think of her as something to smile at and pity.

But if he thought to mortify the young girl before him by such a course, never was self-complacent man more woefully doomed to disappointment. Cool as a Lapland icicle, self-possessed and self-conscious as a crowned queen on her throne, indifferent and careless as the breeze that toyed with her hair, clustering hair, she stood before him, with a pride and ease of manner that, in its very depth of quietude, arose and overtopped his own, and gave the Honorable Alfred Disbrowe, brother of an earl and a peer in prospective, to understand that, if he intended to despise her he must do it at a remarkably safe distance. And he, the flattered, courted, and caressed in all the gilded salons of brilliant London, who had danced with princesses, flirted with royal duchesses, and made love to Lady Georgianas without number—at whose coming cheeks had flush-

ed, and bright eyes had fallen, and hearts had beat faster—under the cool gaze of whose handsome eyes many a pulse under a diamond bracelet had bounded, found himself now calmly waved back, and told to keep his place; and by the bright, clear glance of those gray eyes made to understand he must remember it, too, until she chose to descend from her pinnacle. For once in his life, the dashing guardsman was made to understand that a handsome face, and fine figure, and gallant bearing, and aristocratic name, were not perfectly irresistible.

"Well, sir," said a quick, imperative voice, in tones of mingled amusement and sarcasm, "what is the decision? I see you have come to one. I have undergone a keen scrutiny for the last two or three minutes; and now for your verdict, my lord judge!"

She had faced round so suddenly and unexpectedly, and looked up in his face so keenly, with her peculiar mocking smile, that a slight flush tinged, for an instant, the fine face of Disbrowe in his conscious guilt.

"Ah, you needn't speak. I can read my sentence in that guilty look; and you have pronounced me a second edition of the bottle-nose—a natural curiosity like the orang-outang, or any other outlandish animal, and you are just thinking what a fortune some enterprising showman might make by putting me in a cage, and taking me over to London, and exhibiting me as a real, live specimen of that terrific creature—the American female. Come, confess—isn't that so?"

"Is it possible you can wrong me by such a thought, my dear cousin?" he said, recovering himself. "What can I think of you but that you are the most charming little fairy in existence, and the most enchanting of cousins."

"Do you, really?" said the young lady, casting a critical eye to where one of the servants were about to lead off the horses. "I say, William, mind what you're at there! Would you take those horses, reeking hot, into the stables? Walk them gently up and down for a while, can't you? And so that's your opinion, is it? hum!" she said, with her provoking smile. "Well, what else do you think about me? It didn't take you all that time to conclude I was charming, and what else was it?—oh, enchanting—did it?"

"By no means, how could I help thinking you were very beautiful?"

"Dazzlingly beautiful is the term my admirers generally use; and I like it better," amended the young lady.

"Dazzlingly beautiful, then, be it; the term is most appropriate, and shows the good taste of your admirers, Miss De Vere."

A sudden, hot flush, like a rising flame, leaped into the cheeks of the young girl at the words.

"Miss De Vere," she said, vehemently,

"don't call me that! I hate the name! I do hate it!" she said, almost passionately.

He looked at her in amazement, to see her cheeks hot, and her eyes flashing for an instant; and then, the next, as she met his gaze as if by magic, her face cleared again, and she looked up at him and laughed.

"Don't be shocked! I hate formality, I mean; and it rather startles me to be called any thing so stately as 'Miss De Vere,' and she mimicked his tone to perfection. "I'm not used to it, you see; and it doesn't agree with my constitution and by-laws either. call me Jacquetta, or Jack, or I'll come without calling at all, if you prefer it. 'Just whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad'—rather that style of thing, you know."

"With all my heart, Miss Jacquetta, and may I also hope to hear my Christian name in music from your lips."

"To be sure—you didn't expect I intended calling you any thing else—did you? and you my own cousin, too," and she laughed, and gave him a glance so full of hidden, mocking meaning, that he was more puzzled what to make of her than ever. "And pray what is it? John, Peter, Barnabas, Tom, Dick, or Harry, or what?"

"Neither: it happens to be Alfred De Vere Disbrowe."

"Pshaw! All that for a name. Suppose we make it Alf, for short, eh? Apropos of long names, there is an old Puritan woman who has lived at Fontelle, as a sort of privileged servant, ever since I can remember, and her name is Tribulation Fear the Lord Rawbones—there's a name for you!"

Disbrowe laughed.

"Yes; rather an inconvenient name for every-day use, isn't it?"

"Oh, we call her Tribby, except on festivals, and then she gets her name in full. But now, cousin Alfred, are we to go up to the house; or, as you have exhausted the subject of my innumerable perfections, am I to begin and say pretty things to you?"

"I propose that we adjourn to the house, and I will take all the pretty things for granted. I wish to see my uncle and my other cousins, as soon as possible."

"Well, come along then; they are both in, as it happens, and will be delighted to see you, of course."

Both walked along together, and ascended a broad flight of marble steps that led up to the massive hall-door, in the center part of the building. This opened into a vast hall, high, dark and silent, and flanked on either side by doors, and with a staircase of polished oak at the further end, leading to the upper rooms. Opening a door to the right, Jacquetta ushered him into a spacious drawing-room, very high, very dark, very grand, and silent, and bearing over the high marble mantel the escutcheon of the house of De Vere, with its brilliant silver star. The furniture was carved and massive, and evidently belonged to a former generation;

and a few rare old pictures, masterpieces of master painters, hung around the walls. The immense windows, reaching almost from floor to ceiling, were hung with dark purple damask, lined with corn-colored silk, and the thick, dark carpet was no dainty Brussels or Turkey affair, but one that had evidently been used for half a century, and was likely to stand half a century more. The chairs, and tables, and sofas were all of the same massive, carved antique pattern; and the eyes of the young Englishman lit up with pleasure, as he looked around and half-audibly murmured: "A fit home for a descendant of the old De Veres. I hate new furniture and new houses."

Jacquetta had left him upon his entrance; and for a time he was left alone to wonder a little at the profound silence of the house, and wonder more what manner of girl this odd cousin of his might be. Before he could come to any satisfactory conclusion, the massive oak door swung open, and a tall, hale old man, of stately presence and dignified mien, kindly but frosty, stood on the threshold, with a lady on his arm.

"My dear boy, I'm delighted to see you," he exclaimed in a voice of cordial welcome, as he came forward, and grasping both Disbrowe's hands, shook them heartily. "What an unexpected pleasure this is, to be sure! Bless me! How like you are to your mother, my poor sister Clara, my dear boy! You look like a De Vere, every inch of you! Allow me to make you acquainted with your cousins—this is my daughter Augusta, and this is my daughter Jacquetta, but you know her already, it appears."

"I have that pleasure, sir," said Disbrowe, bowing to "my daughter Augusta," a tall, haughty, dark-eyed, dark-haired, pale-faced beauty, cold and stately as a duchess, with the fine, proud, aristocratic face of the De Veres—as different from her sister as day from night.

"Ah, is it a pleasure?" said Miss Jacquetta, airily. "I didn't know. Perhaps, before you are acquainted with me long, you will have another notion about that."

"Tut, tut, sauce-box!" said her father, chucking her under the chin. "Little girls should be seen and not heard, my dear. You mustn't mind our little Jacky, my boy; she's a spoiled child, and nothing else, and thinks herself privileged to say whatever she thinks."

"A rare virtue in this insincere world," said Disbrowe, politely.

"Is it always a virtue?" said the fair, proud Augusta, lying languidly back in her chair, and lifting her eyes slowly, as though it was too much trouble to raise her heavy lids.

"In Miss Jacquetta it doubtless is, and can not be sufficiently admired, more particularly, as the charming grace with which—"

"There, cousin Alf!" broke in Jacquetta, flinging herself into a chair, and holding



up one tiny foot, and looking at it critically, "don't put yourself out to turn a compliment. I'll imagine the rest, as you did a while ago, you know. As to his not minding me, papa, I wouldn't advise him, as a friend, to try it, for—did you ever see an enraged American female, Captain Disbrow?"

"Not as I am aware of."

"Well, then, don't, as long as you can help it, for the duty horse-nose-essence of wild-cats is nothing to it. It's something terrific. I tell you, and has to be seen to be appreciated. You cold-blooded English, over there, can't begin to have the first idea of what it's like."

"Come, Jacquetta, come! this won't do," said "papa," fidgeting, and taking a pinch of snuff.

"Why, I hope you consider yourself English, Miss Jacquetta," said Disbrowe. "Me! not I! I scorn the idea! I'm Yankee to the core of my heart! A regular Jersey true blue! Me English, indeed! I look as if I had much of the plodding, sober-going John Bull about me!—don't I?"

"Now, Jacquetta, my dear, how can you?" said papa, deprecatingly, while a faint smile dawned on the moonlight face of lady Augusta, and an angry light leaped to the dark eyes of the haughty young Englishman. Fortunately, at that moment a bell rang.

"The first bell," said the master of the house, rising, "any will be served in half an hour, and I presume you will wish a few moments' rest after your long ride."

"I certainly require it," said Disbrowe, running his fingers through the disheveled locks of his rich brown hair; "and I am rather travel-stained just at present, no doubt."

He held open the door for the young ladies to pass out, as he spoke. The queenly Augusta acknowledged the courtesy by the slightest bend of her proud head; but Jacquetta looked cunningly up in his face, and laughed, and kissed her hand to him, and danced after her stately sister like an incarnate sunbeam.

Then Mr. De Vere rung the bell, and a spruce chamber-maid escorted Captain Disbrowe up-stairs to a long gallery, flanked, like the hall below, with doors, and ushered him into what his host had called the "Star Chamber"—a superbly fitted up apartment, with the walls and ceiling gemmed with stars in azure ground, and the cornices fretted with gold-work.

A large, square, old-fashioned bed, hung with heavy drapery of blue and silver, stood opposite the door, and the large oriole windows were draped with curtains of the same. In the immense fire-place roared and blazed a huge wood fire, that warmed and lit up the whole room, and seemed to make the stately carpet on the floor literally sparkle.

An immense mirror, reaching to the ceiling, reflected back the room; and on a large oak table beside it lay books and drawings, and numerous elegant toilet trunks. But none of these objects attracted the eye of Disbrowe—something else had caught his attention the moment he entered, and held it chained still.

Over the bronze mantel hung a picture in an oval frame, heavily carved; a portrait of a small, mocking, tantalizing, bewitching face, with short, waving curls, and sparkling, flashing, gray eyes, scintillating with mirth and mischief, and hidden power. It was a portrait of Jacquetta De Vere; and the red lips seemed wreathed into a mocking smile, and the flashing eyes seemed to deride him, as they met his own. The head was half turned, as if she were looking back—just as he had seen her when she left the room a moment before, with the same wicked, half-defiant, half-laughing grace.

Leaning his arm on the mantel, and quite forgetful of the flight of time, he stood there and looked at it. What thoughts were thronging through his mind at that moment? Did he think of the prediction of the weird witch of the lone inn—of the dark, loathsome pit, at the bottom of which, her high pride laid low, she was to lie at his feet? Did he think of it afterward, in the dark days that were to come, when he knew a doom worse than death was hers—that fair, high-spirited young girl, whose bright face smiled on him from the wall now?

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### THE SECRET.

"She said, and raised her skinny hand, As in defiance, to high heaven, And stretched her long, lean finger forth, And spoke aloud the words of power."

—THALABA.

The dinner-bell had rung, and a long interval had succeeded, but still the Honorable Alfred Disbrowe stirred not—still he stood gazing on that picture, charmed, fascinated, as a child is charmed and fascinated by a serpent. Not that the knowing, dashing young guardsman, the gay man of fashion, had much of the innocence and simplicity of a bird about him, and neither would he insinuate that Miss Jacquetta De Vere had any thing of the dark and dreadful subtlety of a serpent; but certainly it was some sensation akin to snake-charming that invited his eyes to that piquant, entrancing, yet any thing but beautiful face. It was not love—on the contrary, it was more like positive dislike; but still he stood and gazed, quite forgetful that he was to arrange his dress, and that the bell had rung ten minutes before, and that, in all probability, the original was waiting down stairs, and in no very sweet humor at that same waiting.

A sharp knock at the door startled him at last from his reverie, and, in answer to his "Come in!" the door opened, and Frank entered.

"What! not ready yet, and the dinner waiting for the last ten minutes, and Uncle Rob the most particular old gentleman that ever wore a wig! Whew!" said Master Frank, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and beginning to whistle.

"Is it possible?" said Disbrowe, starting up, shocked at his want of thought. "I deserve the bastinado for my neglect. I can't tell what I was thinking of, to forget myself so," he said, as he hurriedly began to arrange his toilet.

"Well, hurry up, and I'll wait for you," said Frank, seating himself. "Jack advised uncle to send up one of the kitchen-maids to help you to make yourself fascinating—it took you so long. So they've put you in the Star Chamber, have they? There's Jack's picture. I remember the day she hung it there, and called it the brightest star of the lot. Do you think her good-looking?"

"Certainly—you know there is no such thing as a bad-looking woman," said Disbrowe, politely.

"Oh, isn't there? What a blessed beauty Mother Grizzle is, for instance! Gusty's good-looking, though, ain't she?"

"Very beautiful," said Disbrowe, in all sincerity this time. "She is a true De Vere."

"Which would you take to be the oldest, now—Jack or Gus?" said Frank.

"Miss Augusta, of course," said Disbrowe, surprised at such a question. "He laughed, 'but she ain't,' thought Jack's two or three years older."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Disbrowe, in astonishment. "I can scarcely credit it!"

"Well, you may, then. Gusty's only eighteen, and Jack's twenty, and more, for all I know. She looks younger, don't she? But that's because she's so small and fair—fair people always look younger than they really are, you know."

"Younger! I hardly took her to be sixteen," said Disbrowe. "She certainly does not look that."

"She is, then, and she makes no bones of telling it, either; and then it makes her look like a little girl, wearing her hair flying about her face in curls, instead of braiding it, and fixing it up as Gusty does. Do you like red hair?"

"No—but then Miss Jacquetta's is auburn, is it not?" said Disbrowe, with another polite fiction.

"Auburn!" said Frank, contemptuously. "It won't be well for you to tell Jack that, any way! She's proud of her leonine locks, I can tell you, and calls it her crowning glory, and wouldn't change it, she says, for any other color under the sun. I remember Will Redfern called her a young lioness once, with her red mane, after she horse-whipped him one day, in the street."

Disbrowe shuddered.

"Horse-whipped him! Good heavens! what did she do that for? It can't be possible, surely."

"Yes, it is possible, and served him just right, I say; and, what's more, she wouldn't mind doing it over again. He laughed at her, and she told Jacquetta; and as the girl had no father or brother to take her part, Jack gave him particular fits with her horse-whip the next time she met him. Oh! she's spunky, I promise you! Take care you don't anger her some day," said Frank, laughing, "or she'll be after you with a sharp stick."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Disbrowe, in horror. "What an Amazon she is! Who would ever think a De Vere could do such an atrocious thing!"

"I know another De Vere who did such an atrocious thing, and it wasn't to avenge distressed innocence, either," said Frank, maliciously.

"You mean me, I suppose," said Disbrowe, laughing, "but I'm not a girl. Perhaps, though, it's the fashion for young girls to act so here in America."

"Oh, every one's independent here—do just as they like, and don't care a snap for their neighbors; and our Jack's the pluckiest one of the lot. Although she's but little, she's made of good mettle," as the old song says."

"Do you know," said Disbrowe, brushing his tangled locks, "she reminds me so much of some one else I have seen—I can't think who; a shadowy resemblance in every motion."

"I think she looks like little Orrie Howlett, at the inn, if that's what you mean," said Frank, "although Orrie's a regular little squaw for darkness, and Jack's fair as she well can be. I know they always remind me of one another—and others say so, too."

"Yes, now I think of it, she does," said Disbrowe, meditatively; "but somehow she's not the one I mean. By Jove! I have it now," he cried, with a start; "she looks like the fellow I horse-whipped—a pocket edition of that same old con, revised and improved, with the very same nose—the very same look in her eyes, that he has."

"Good gracious!" said Frank, laughing, "here's a discovery! Our Jack like old Nick Tempest! What would Jack say if she heard that? Not but what I believe she would take it as a compliment; for she fairly dotes on dare-devils like him, and would make a tip-top wife for a salt-sea rover or an Italian brigand."

"Speaking of brigands," said Disbrowe, "reminds me that I saw with old Nick Tempest, as you call him, a most enchanting little specimen of that article in a real brigandish rig. Now, then," he added, giving a few finishing touches, "I am at your service."

Both descended to the dining-room, where they found Mr. De Vere and his daughters awaiting them. Disbrowe's apology for detaining them was smilingly accepted, and all were soon seated round the ample board of the master of Fontelle Hall.

During the meal Disbrowe made some inquiries about the society of the neighborhood and the gentry.

"Gentry," said lady Augusta, with her languid smile, "we have no such thing here, captain. All men are born free and equal, isn't that what the Declaration of Independence says, papa?"

"How do you, Miss De Vere, believe in such humbug as that?" said Disbrowe, with a curling lip.

"I think," said the young lady, steadily, "and with a rising flush, tingling, for a moment, her pale cheeks, that pride of birth is carried to an absurd excess in England. Will it redeem a mean or dishonorable character that he can boast his forefathers entered with the Conquest, and can display a coat-of-arms that reaches back for a score of generations. I think," she said, with increasing warmth, and an unusual light in her dark eye, and an unusual flush on her pale cheek, "that a man of the people, who rises by his own unaided efforts in the battle of life, to power and distinction, deserves a thousandfold more esteem and respect, and should be a prouder man, than he who can trace his descent back to the days of William the Conqueror, and can boast of nothing else. The great Earl of Oxford, from whom we De Veres boast we have descended, was a great man, doubtless, in his day, and would have spurned the people as the dust under his feet; but whether will be or Washington, the Man of the People, be longest remembered? Which is the greater, let posterity decide. One was forgotten many and many a year ago; but while the world lasts will the other ever cease to be remembered and revered?"

"Bravo! encore! I say," shouted Frank, delighted.

"Really, Augusta," said her father, laying down his knife and fork, and looking at her, "a change has come o'er the spirit of your dream lately. Two years ago, my dear Alfred, there never was a greater aristocrat

than the young lady who has just made that republican speech; she would have trodden on the necks of the people as remorselessly as your haughty brother, Ernest, himself, and thought them honored by the condescension, when, lo and behold! she suddenly faces about, and becomes a red-hot rebel and republican—stands up for the people, and advocates equal rights, and liberty, fraternity and equality, and all the rest of it, as furiously as if she were one of a French mob. What has changed her tactics, I don't know; but changed they are, with a vengeance, and I expect her to crown it all by marrying a Smith, Jones, or Robinson, one day shortly! I shan't be at all surprised, if she does."

He laughed as he spoke; but, at the last words a deadly paleness swept over the beautiful face of his daughter, leaving her, even to her lips, cold and white as marble. Disbrowe lifted his eyes, and looked at her, as if a sudden light had dawned upon him, and slightly smiled.

"Miss Augusta is too stanch a De Vere ever to marry beneath her," he said, significantly.

"Be assured of that, sir!" she said, haughtily. "I never shall!"

"That's my proud Lady Augusta!" said her father, laughing. "But what's got into my little Jack-o'-lantern here that she sits so still?"

"It's so seldom I hear sensible people talk, papa," said Jacquetta, demurely, "that I like to listen in silent awe—when they do—that's all."

"I am afraid Miss Jacquetta is inclined to be sarcastic," said Disbrowe, coloring slightly at her covert smile.

"Me!" said Jacquetta, raising her eyebrows in innocent surprise. "Oh, no! I hope you don't suspect me of any thing so shocking!"

"Tell him about our gentry, puss," said Mr. De Vere, with a sly chuckle. "You know every one within forty miles round."

"Yes; and further, too," said Jacquetta. "As to the De Veres, and with a faint cry, she caught and steadied herself by a chair. As she did so, the door opened and a servant appeared."

"Papa, let me hear her! Send the man away! I must hear her, papa!" she said, wildly, taking a step toward her.

"Nonsense, Augusta!" said her father, sharply. "Hear her, indeed! the old impostor! Reynolds, go and bring William and James here."

The servant disappeared, and old Grizzle, folding her cloak closer about her, sat down, with her evil, sneering smile.

"Very well—be it so, then. I will go to prison; and the very day I do, your secret, Augusta De Vere, shall be blown by the four winds of heaven over all the land—and, what's more, another secret that I came here to-day to tell you—one that you would give the broad lands of Fontelle to hear. Remember that!"

"Oh, I must hear her! I must, papa!" cried Augusta, gasping for breath, and looking ready to faint.

It was strange to see the calm, the stately, the haughty Augusta De Vere moved like this. In all his life her father had never seen any thing like it before; and now he gazed upon her, thunderstruck.

"In Heaven's name, what is the meaning of this, Augusta? What secret is this wretched old woman talking about?"

"Oh, I can't tell you! I dare not tell you! I must hear her!" exclaimed Augusta, distractedly, as she went over and stood close beside the woman.

"I must tell you in private," said Grizzle, looking around.

"You must not leave the room!" said Mr. De Vere, sternly. "Jacquetta, tell the servants to wait, and turn the key in the door and tell this farce end!"

Jacquetta, looking astonished and bewildered, obeyed.

"Don't listen, then! Stand off!" said Grizzle, with an angry wave of her hand. "A De Vere should not be an eavesdropper. Come over here, young lady," she said, taking Augusta by the arm, and leading her over to the remotest corner. Captain Disbrowe walked to the window and looked out. Jacquetta bent over the table, with her back toward them; and Mr. De Vere, looking angry, astonished, and half-alarmed, stood, with a frowning brow, regarding them.

So nearly ten minutes passed—during which Grizzle talked in a fierce, rapid, hissing whisper, without once stopping, and grasping Lady Augusta's arm in a vice-like grip. As she went on, a frightful change passed over the young girl. One arm was half raised, her blanched lips sprung, quivering, apart, her eyes strained and staring, an awful darkness, as if she were strangling, settling on her face, and with it a look of horror—of wildest, most unspeakable horror—fell.

Suddenly there was the sound of a heavy fall, followed by a cry from Grizzle—a sharp, quick cry of alarm, echoed by one longer and more passionate from Mr. De Vere. Disbrowe and Jacquetta faced round in terror to behold Augusta lying on the floor, with her father and Grizzle bending over her, and a dark stream of blood slowly oozing from her mouth.

"Leave the room!" interrupted Mr. De Vere, waving his hand.

The man vanished, glad to get the door between him and the fierce intruder; and Grizzle, folding her arms over her breast, regarded them with her dark, evil sneer.

"Well, most potent, grave and reverend signors, am I lachry, too," she said, "so you had it all settled to arrest old Grizzle Howlett and her sons, and clap them into prison, and then hang them for robbery and murder? What a pity so elaborate a scheme should end in smoke, as so many other schemes have done before!"

"Is the woman mad?" said Mr. De Vere, astounded, "to come here like this, knowing her guilt; for such an act is certainly the very climax of madness!"

"No; I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of sober reason, as you shall soon find to your cost. What would you say to me, if I were to tell you that you will not only let me go forth free, but safe from your interference from henceforth?"

"You will soon have my answer," said Mr. De Vere, seizing the bell-rope and ringing a violent peal.

"Call your servants as fast as you like!" said the woman, with a look of contempt; "but before they, or you, lay a finger on me, I must and will have a word with that young lady there!" And she pointed to Augusta, who stood regarding her with mingled horror and loathing.

"We will see about that," said Mr. De Vere, firmly.

"I tell you," said the woman, raising her arm and speaking with a sort of passionate earnestness, "it will be better for you if you do—until the very day of your death you, and all who bear your proud name, will rue it if you do not! Listen to me, lady—you who stand there so queenly in your haughty pride and scorn—it will be better for you to hear what I have to say; for I have your secret and another besides, that you ought to have known long before this."

A frightful paleness overspread the haughty face of Augusta, and with a faint cry, she caught and steadied herself by a chair. As she did so, the door opened and a servant appeared."

"Papa, let me hear her! Send the man away! I must hear her, papa!" she said, wildly, taking a step toward her.

"Nonsense, Augusta!" said her father, sharply. "Hear her, indeed! the old impostor! Reynolds, go and bring William and James here."

The servant disappeared, and old Grizzle, folding her cloak closer about her, sat down, with her evil, sneering smile.

"Very well—be it so, then. I will go to prison; and the very day I do, your secret, Augusta De Vere, shall be blown by the four winds of heaven over all the land—and, what's more, another secret that I came here to-day to tell you—one that you would give the broad lands of Fontelle to hear. Remember that!"

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(To be continued—commenced in No. 87.)

**The Black Crescent:**  
OR,  
**COALS AND ASHES OF LIFE.**  
A MASKED MYSTERY OF BALTIMORE.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,  
AUTHOR OF "WOODWIND," "RALPH HAXON, THE CHEMIST," "THE WARNING ARROW," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVI.  
A SHADOW FOLLOWS SHADOWS.

The shadowy apparition of the lawyer, who seemed to rise from out the ground, and who was ever getting in the road of the villains when they least expected, and strongest hoped not, to see him—his ghost-like appearance there between them; the manner in which he laid hold of them; the significant emphasis of his speech, as he looked into the face of first one and then the other, apparently enjoying their astonishment; all rendered their surprise great, the expression of their countenances one of fear.

Haxon's first thought was of arrest. He had drawn a pistol on the lawyer, threatened life to this, Crewly had a witness in the fourth party who had arrived so opportunely upon the scene at the Capitol. The act was punishable by law, and if arrested, charged with an attempt upon another's

life, the result would be incarceration, if not attended with more serious end.

He was speechless, somewhat terrified, could but glare upon the one who held him, and that glare, despite his situation, was one of hatred and desperate defiance.

Gill Bret just glanced into the lawyer's face, and exclaimed, with a grunt:

"Well, by Heaven!"

Whether it was disgust, bewilderment or amazement at the way in which these bony fingers grasped, and seemed to sink into the flesh of his shoulder, or whether it was all these combined in a feeling of helplessness, as he halted in that remaining grip of iron, it is impossible to say; but the words he uttered were all that could express the sensation he experienced, whatever that sensation was.

"Just the parties I wanted!" repeated the lawyer, eying them alternately.

"An' what d'you want us for?" spoke Bret, with a scowl.

"Release me!" demanded Haxon, in a voice thickened by rage and pain, for the hold on his shoulder gripped harder each second.

"Softly. A bird in the hand is worth two in a bush—as I've two birds in hand, I'm not bothered about the bush. Explains that! What do you think of yourselves, eh? Rascals, both!"

Their dialogue, very naturally, was attracting attention. Haxon assumed a little brass.

"What is the meaning of this insult, scoundrel? Take your hands off!"

Crewly was for a moment taken aback by this speech. But he soon saw through it. He also saw that, in that densely-packed mass of human beings, a number of faces were staring in wonder, lowering his voice, he said:

"Yes, I see. 'T won't do! Pretty smart, that. Rather brassy—very. My name's Crewly. I'm a lawyer. Sometimes I fight a little'—significantly. 'If you don't come with me docilely, I'll give you another laming, in about a pair of minutes. And I always keep my word—more so with a rascal than anybody else. Hear? Now then, march; turn round; come—sharp!'"

"What you goin' to do?" put Bret, without budging.

"Ahem! none of your business. Just—"

"None of your tricks 'till me!" snarled the bruiser, not so much cowed, after all, by vivid recollections of his late thrashing. "I ain't the man 'at's a-goin' to be bossed by you nor any other carpet-bagger jackass—mind? Now, you just take your hand off my shoulder!"

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Crewly; then he ground out, between his teeth:

"Take care now! Hit you once, knock you in three pieces, this time—sure. Scatter your nose all over your face—I will. Earnest, I am. No fooling. Central Guard House. I arrest you—"

"You do, eh?" Gill Bret's head was lowered, his dull, muddy eyes seemed, for the moment, ablaze; he looked at the lawyer from under half-closed lids.

That the bruiser could hit a stout blow with his fist, must be inferred, else he would not have acquired the appellation we give him. Though the lawyer had outmatched him in a fair fight, his bull-dog courage was not gone, by any means, nor would he have hesitated to give his enemy another "shake," had opportunity offered.

Hence, when Crewly stated that their destination was to be the Central Guard House, he very promptly determined within himself that he would submit to nothing of the kind.

Harold Haxon saw his companion's fist slowly doubling, saw that Bret was about to do something toward their escape, and he, also, aroused to the emergency of the case.

Slowly, his own fist began to double and his eyes fixed upon the lawyer, with a savage gleam.

When Bret struck, he would strike, too; the simultaneous resistance was certain to prove effectual, and their escape be insured.

"You're arrested, I say. Understand that?" said Crewly, immediately.

"An' who's a-goin' to take us?" Bret asked, sneeringly.

"Who? Well!—more impudence than I've seen in a month, this. Who? Why me, me, me. Hear?—me. Come on now, march!"

Two fists were tightly clenched; two pairs of eyes glowered upon him.

"Hear me! Come on. Won't? Well, now—some one lit Crewly a smart blow on the back, and some one cried in his ear:

"Look! Look, Crewly! there's Eola! Quick!"

It was Austin Burns. Blake, Crewly and Burns were there together, to witness the display of fireworks, and the lawyer was close by his two companions, when he halted Haxon and Bret, though they did not observe his movement.

The tone was so sharp, the cry so sudden, the mouth so close to his ear, that Crewly winced, and his hold on his captives loosened.

The young man had, unknowing, done his bitterest enemies a favor.

No sooner was the grip on their shoulders withdrawn, than, like eels, quick as a flash, the villains slipped away in the crowd.

Perhaps it was better for Crewly that matters were so; else, in another instant, two hard fists, sped with hate, directed in desperation, would have blinded him and knocked him senseless.

He was not venturesome by nature; thought that, after thrashing one, in the forenoon, and escaping the pistol of the other, they would yield to him. He knew not the impending calamity to himself, and the escape of his captives threw him into considerable ill-humor.

"Hang it!" he exclaimed, turning upon Austin, with a frown: "there you go again! Every time I catch those rascals, you let 'em off. Bad business, sir. Want of co-operation. You'll have to let me alone in future or—I'll get mad! Now then, what's the matter? What made you squeak in my ear, eh?"

"It was Eola, Mr. Crewly—" began the young man, who may be pardoned what he had done, considering the excitement occasioned in him by a supposed vision of his betrothed. But Crewly interrupted him with a snap.

"Eola? What was Eola? Where?"

"In the barouche. Didn't you see her?"

"See her?—no. What barouche?"

"Saw her in a barouche this



wounded men. Your head's turned. Eola Forde go through this crowd?—in a barouche?—you saw her? Nonsense! Come on now; where's Wat Blake?"

"Gone after the barouche; after Eola," replied Austin, who felt this would convince his friend he was not dreaming.

Crewly had started to move away. He stopped short; the look he fixed upon the young man was comical in the extreme, and he enunciated the one word:

"No!"

"But I tell you yes," Austin said, firmly. "Why do you doubt me? I tell you I saw Eola." Wat Blake saw her; he has gone in pursuit."

"Find it a long one then, I guess." He sniffed and chuckled as he thought of Wat Blake taking the useless, fatiguing run he had, in the morning.

"Don't you think he can follow them?" "Hope he may," returned the lawyer, il-lu-dially. "Come on, now; the fun's over; and I've lost those rascals for a second time. Hang it! It's all your fault!"

Austin was not disposed to encourage Crewly's ill-humor by retort. The exhibition of fireworks was over; the concourse of people were moving away from the scene of their enjoyment.

Songs, jests, laughter, shouts filled the air. Pretty misses on the arms of affectionate lovers, were chatting merrily, and praising with warmth all they had seen.

Vehicles were striving in vain to go forward; people elbowed, jammed, forced themselves upon those in their front and rear, endeavoring to make a clear way; and as they moved down the avenue, it was like the immense waves of a ruffled sea.

Crewly and his young friend hurried forward through every little opening that offered a chance of escape.

When they could walk abreast, Austin Burns said, in a voice that betrayed the eagerness of hope:

"Oh! I do wish that Blake may succeed in tracing her out!"

"Her? Oh, yes; excuse me; I had forgot. So do I," the latter, with peculiar emphasis.

"Your words imply that it is impossible," said the young man, interrogatively.

"Do they? Oh, no. But you see, fact is—"

"Well, what, Mr. Crewly?"

"Why, only this: if he has to run like I did, this morning, he'll not be likely to catch 'em. Ahem! I not very. Give it up as a bad job. That's all."

"Did you chase them far, this morning?"

"Did I?" dryly. "Rather! Straight mile—full sprint. Then up a hill; then had a fight; nearly got my brains blown out. Umph! Enjoyable, that is, or was it?"

"But they must be somewhere inside the city limits."

"Then they take pains to reach home by driving clear round the outskirts. Tell you, you might as well chase a shooting star! Fact: I do believe they saw me, though."

"But, Mr. Crewly, we must continue the search, even if it should lead us all the way around the globe! We must find them."

"Exactly. But, if it's going to be a stern chase, and we've got to follow around that globe on a full run, you'll excuse me if I give out about the time we've made a couple of miles. If I was steel-planked, and carried a steam apparatus to move my legs, and a bellows to keep—but what's the use in talking about it! Ahem! I'm afraid it's a bad business. We're going to have a long chase and a strong chase, and a chase that'll make us ache, before we hook what we're after."

As they passed the Reservation, opposite the theater, they did not notice the forms of two men standing in the shadow of a poster-board, and who exchanged a few hurried words as their friends passed them.

Christopher Crewly and Austin Burns went on, unconscious of the two figures that were following them.

Had we glanced into the faces of those who walked in the rear, we would have seen features distorted with malignant hate and the black, fiery, threatening expression of murderous resolve.

And there was still another figure, who followed, with equally cautious movements, those who were dogging the steps of Crewly and Burns.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## FOUND!

WAT BLAKE had started in pursuit of the barouche in which, he felt sure, he had seen Eola.

The lawyer had acquainted him with the occurrence of the forenoon, and as he made his way, with difficulty, through the crowd, he resolved to make his chase as short as possible—he would head them off at the first opportunity.

The pursued parties seemed unaware of his movements, for they proceeded along at leisure speed, and Blake gained upon them rapidly.

Into and along "D" street they led him; past the Reservation; up Thirteenth, then down "F."

As he passed Sheldon's dancing academy, he was met by a small party of revellers, who were going home and somewhat under the influence of liquor. For a moment his attention was attracted from the object of his pursuit—only for a moment, but when the party had passed him, and he looked up again, the barouche had vanished.

His heart gave a bound; he ran quickly to the corner—looked up, down, east, west. Not a sign.

The streets were deserted and gloomy; not one solitary figure, or an echoing foot-step.

"Too bad!" he exclaimed, disappointedly. "Crewly said it was like chasing a locomotive. They have disappeared altogether. Too bad!"

He fancied he heard the rumbling of wheels on the soft, earthy street; but even this ceased, immediately, and he turned homeward, thoroughly discouraged.

"Strange," he thought, "how they elude us! This does not promise well for our object. Bertha must not know of this second vain pursuit; it will cause her to despair. I regret that Crewly mentioned his chase of this morning. And Haxon, with his vile ally, is in town, eh? Poor Eola! I fear for her. But then, Providence surely will not permit a match between two so unfitted for each other! Our case is in the hands of the Omnipotent; if He designs our success or failure in this pursuit, either is for the best. But it will go hard with Bertha, if that villain should wed her child!"

The hour was late. Wat Blake quickened his pace, glancing about him occasionally, as if expecting to see again those who

had slipped away from him, and alternately framing his thoughts upon their situation, which promised nothing.

When he reached the east square at the Capitol, he slackened his walk. He pondered deeply, surmising and considering upon all feasible plans or means which might aid him in discovering the whereabouts of those he sought.

While in the midst of these reveries, the rattle and grind of wheels, on the cobbles before Whitney's Hotel, struck upon his ear.

All vehicles, of whatsoever kind, had an interest for him, just then; the sound of one approaching, naturally enough, drew his attention. It was a barouche—ah! Blake smothered an exclamation which rose to his lips; his heart throbbed, his face flushed with the fever of a fresh excitement.

As they passed swiftly by the gas-lamp, at the corner, he had seen a familiar face—two of them. It was Harnden Forde and Eola!

This time there was no mistake. They were close enough for him to hear Eola speak.

"We certainly have not been disappointed in the promised sights, father—"

Like a shadow, silent and swift, glided Wat Blake after them.

Had they far to go? Would this chase too prove fruitless? Was he to have another run for nothing? These questions he asked himself, and almost held his breath in suspense, as the vehicle whirled to the right around the north-east corner of the square. Then it turned to the left and held up, until the horses only walked.

"I have them!" he exclaimed; "they live near!"

Half the block was gone over; then it passed before a fine, large house.

Wat Blake stepped behind a tree, and watched.

Forde and Eola alighted; they entered the house. The barouche drove off; silence reigned. The retreat of the pursued pair was discovered.

"Found!" burst from his lips; and he hurried away toward his own boarding-house.

"Found at last! Not a moment is to be lost! We shall see Harnden Forde at once—tonight! Bertha shall see him, and give him opportunity to repair the ill he has done. Oh! Heaven give us ability to convince him how ridiculous is that accursed superstition of his! and all may yet be well; the Black Crescent will be restored! The letters which Bertha holds, the dying confession of Louise Ternor—these must show him his folly, when it is explained! And who has he to thank for the leniency I propose?"—a dark frown settling on his brow—"who has turned me from my vow to make him repent in shame, his wickedness? Ora!—dear girl that she is! How she has pleaded for him! How she has beseeched us to forgive! Who could deny her wish? Who refuse concession to her argument? So pure—so gentle—yes, she is all that saves you from fearful punishment at my hands, Harnden Forde. She, your own child, whose life your weak, wicked nature had so blighted, pleads for you, saves you from the dishonor of publicity of your acts!"

He walked faster. His boarding-house, as before stated, was scarce a stone's throw from the rooms occupied by Harnden Forde and his child.

Christopher Crewly and his young friend Burns, proceeded straight homeward.

Once, and once only, did the object of the two mysterious shadows who followed them become apparent. It was while they walked around the square and had almost reached their boarding-house.

As they pursued their way outside the railings, the two figures entered the gate, ran in a direction right oblique, came out on the south of the square, concealed themselves behind two of the trees that lined the curb, their forms blending in the surrounding gloom.

Unconscious of danger, Crewly and Burns continued briskly on.

A glittering knife-blade flashed in the air as a stout arm raised in the air as they drew nigh. The would-be assassin gathered his energies for a sudden spring, concentrated all his strength in the arm that was to deal the death blow.

Murder was imminent. The intended victims drew nearer.

Suddenly the footsteps of another comer sounded upon the still air, and a muffled figure came up. Crewly recognized him.

"Hello, Wat Blake!"

"Is that you, Mr. Crewly?"

"That's me. Yours forever—much. What's the row, eh? Where are you going now?"

"I was looking for you—"

"Did you follow them?" interrupted Austin, quickly, his whole mind upon Eola.

"Yes—and lost them."

The young man groaned.

"Certainly—lost 'em!" exclaimed Crewly, treating the intelligence as a matter of course, and looking at Austin in a way that plainly meant, "Told you so!"

"But I was fortunate enough to find them again."

"Eh? Found 'em again?" Crewly contemplated him with a sharp gaze.

"You found them again?" cried Austin, hope revived in his breast. "Quick!—tell me! Where—where are they, Blake?"

"Yes—where are they? I'd like to know," added Crewly.

"I lost the barouche that I chased at Tenth and 'F' streets. Giving up, I then came home, and had almost reached the house, when fate brought them right before my eyes—"

"Good! Fate!" put in the lawyer.

"They live within a square of our boarding-house."

Both listeners started.

"Don't say!" exclaimed Crewly, in huge surprise.

Austin Burns was being consumed with impatience.

"Go on, Blake! What else?" he cried.

"Where do they live! Take us there."

"I was walking up and down here, waiting for you," continued Blake. "I thought, perhaps, you'd come in a car. We'll now go to them, at once."

"Oh, Eola! Eola!—found at last!" uttered the young man, as they started off.

"Hurry, please—you do not walk fast; you keep me in suspense, purposely. Come, come!"

"Now, young man, keep cool," advised Crewly, who, with hat, as usual, on the back of his head, sleeves pushed up, and legs moving at an amazing rate, was, him-

self, the picture of excitement, and the last one to set an example of coolness, under the circumstances. "I say, keep cool. Hear? Bad business—this getting excited. Look at me—come on, Wat Blake! I am perfectly calm—never felt more indifferent in all my life—hurry, Blake! If you allow your nerves to get unstrung, it'll hurt your wound. Fact: I never permit excitement to sway my actions. Be like me, sir—see! Perfectly—Wat Blake, come on! Now, if—"

"Hey? Why, they don't live here?"

Blake had paused before their boarding-house. He was ascending the steps.

"Blake, you surely can not mean that they are in the same house with us?" cried Austin.

"No," was the reply; "I have stopped for Bertha and Ora. I saw them before I saw you. They are waiting. They would go with us."

"Hurry—hurry, then," said the young man, impatiently. "Every moment is an hour. It is a trial to count the seconds that I am separated from Eola."

"Yes," spoke Crewly, "separation's reduced to seconds. Must say, I'm a little impatient myself. Want to see Harnden Forde considerably much—I do. That laudanum affair, you know. So—he's gone!"

Blake disappeared within the house. He was absent from them, probably, ten minutes, but those minutes were, to Austin, like ages.

When Wat Blake returned, he was accompanied by Bertha Forde and Ora. The former's face was pale and stern, her mien markedly reserved. She was about to confront the man who had caused her every suffering in life, through his weak, superstitious nature—who had spurned her when she offered to forgive.

Would she forgive him now? Had Ora's pleadings accomplished their object? Would the man go unpunished who had made the whole of her (Ora's) past life a horrid dream to look back upon?

Neither mother nor daughter spoke. Their minds were busy, and yet it would be hard to tell the exact thoughts of each. The whole party were silent, as if by mutual understanding.

Christopher Crewly and Austin Burns—or, at least, one of the two—had been miraculously delivered from the fatal knife-blow, by the unexpected appearance of Wat Blake.

As the three moved away, the shining knife was returned to its sheath, and a voice muttered, savagely:

"Curse—the—luck!"

The voice was Gil Bret's.

The accompanying shadow was Harold Haxon. The last-named villain glided out from behind a tree, and exclaimed, in half-smothered anger:

"By the fiends, Gil Bret, I swear it would seem that Satan has turned against us!"

"That 'ere's just it!" returned the bruiser, in a guttural, growling tone, and he gazed after the fast disappearing forms of the three men.

"But you heard, didn't you?" said, and asked, Haxon.

"Heard?"

"Yes—they've found out where Forde lives. I heard that Burns mention Eola's name."

"That 'ere's a fac! So 'e did."

The bruiser suddenly recollected.

"What is to hinder our becoming as wise as they are?"

"How?"

"How! Didn't you hear that man—you say his name is Blake—tell the others they'd go to Forde's house at once?"

"O-h! So—'e did."

"There's going to be a row there, you may wonder."

"An' I'd like to see that 'ere row, Haxy."

Bret saw through the other's meaning.

"When Forde drives them from him—as he will do—then we'll step in. Eh?"

"Jes so!"

They followed the trio, skulking in the shadows of the railing, and keeping a sharp look-out, lest they should lose sight of those whose footsteps they dogged.

They soon made another discovery—saw where our friends lived—saw the party of five leave the house and proceed northward.

Soon Blake paused before the house into which he had seen Harnden Forde and Eola enter. He gave the bell a loud pull. Then an ominous silence prevailed.

There was another watcher, another witness to the movements of all—the mysterious old woman who had made her appearance in the morning, near Seventh street.

It was she who followed the two villains all the way from Thirteenth street.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## WHERE IS THE BLACK CRESCENT?

HARNDEN FORDE and his child occupied apartments on the first floor—two bed-rooms and a parlor, *en suite*.

They had not retired yet—sat in their parlor, amid the rich tapestries and other furniture of costly elegance.

Forde was again in his silent, thoughtful mood. Eola sat beside him, her head pillowed on his shoulder, and she spoke to him in tones whose gentleness persuaded of the humor of abstraction that would fasten upon him.

They had just returned from the revelries and brilliant show that enlivened Pennsylvania avenue. The drive in the evening was for her doing, for she had determined that no feature of the Carnival—particularly the sublime picture of illumination—should be lost upon her father.

"Are you not pleased with what you have seen?" she asked, looking up into his face, as if in wonder that he could be so indifferent to the great display they had witnessed.

"Yes," he replied, "I am pleased, Eola—very much. It is most enough to make one forget trouble."

"Then let it be so! Oh, let it be so, father! Forget your troubles. You are wearing yourself away, in mind and body, and it is to no purpose. Why, even if you had any thing to fear from Harold Haxon—and I feel, I feel that you have not—even then, what good to be brooding over a situation so unpleasant, when it will not better the aspect of things?"

How quick she was to catch upon his words! And it was always so, since their arrival in Washington. The merest point was dear to her, and she never failed to use her utmost argument.

Forde was silent for a moment; presently his eyes turned to those of his child, and a faint smile wreathed about his mouth.

"My little pet, how you do strive to give me courage! I see through your kind, loving intent; but there is one thing—you forget that there is other danger than that which threatens through Harold Haxon. My wronged wife, your mother, poor, ill-treated Bertha, would punish me for my past wickedness. And I deserve it—yes, I deserve it! The latter part of his speech in a voice tremulous with emotion."

"Oh, no, father! I am sure mother will forgive you—for my sake—"

"I fear, I know not."

"How do you know? You are too fast. I can not think that the one who gave me birth, to whom I owe my heart—which is ever ready to forgive those who would wrong me, if they desist and strive to make amends—I can not think that such a one, who gave me to the world as I am, can be so different from me and deny you what her own child would grant to any—"

"Nay, nay, Eola; wait. You promise too much. I know your heart is in your task, but, think—such wrongs as I have done your mother are not so easily forgiven, if at all. God! I wonder that even you will call me 'father,' or forgive, after learning what you have!"

He was weeping. Not sobbing, but that silent gush of tears which wells from the deepest fountain of the soul, and speaks, far more, of utter sadness.

His voice was husky; his vision was dim, uncertain.

"Would you like to see her now—mother?" Eola inquired, hesitatingly.

"Yes," he answered, though the monosyllable was uttered chokingly. "Yes, I would like to see her. I would plead, beg, beseech for forgiveness. Would she grant it?"

The question was put more to himself. "Yes, father, I am sure she would grant it. She could not look upon you, see how you repented, see how, with anxiety and fear, you had wasted away—until—oh! father—and her words were broken by sobs that would burst from her lips—"you are not what you were once! So proud, so erect, noble to look upon; and now—now—"

She could not speak further; her lips trembled, her tongue would not obey.

Harnden Forde, with nervous hand, tenderly smoothed the golden wealth of hair back from the white brow of his child. It was a picture.

Then, in the stillness of deepening night, with no sound stirring the passive air, save the soft murmur of their voices, the bright rays of the chandelier haloing a lovely, ministering angel in the form and garb of mortal, who soothed, by her tone of sweet assurance, the unrested mind of him whose tottering frame leaned for support upon this gentle girl, and felt that all the world was turned against him.

Was there not a hallowed atmosphere vibrating round them? Was it not a time for things aerial to whisper among themselves and wrap in sympathy?

Hark! A slow, mournful chime disturbed that holy silence. It was the tower-clock, in the hall without, striking the hour of eleven.

The clear, harmonious notes of the silver bells floated through the room, and mystic echoes dwelt upon the air.

They listened to the weird music, as if the strains contained a fascination for the mind, but their thoughts were far from being on the tremor of the bells.

The cadent sounds lingered till minutest keys died out, and then Eola spoke again.

"Father, I am going to ask you something. I want you to promise me you will not be disturbed."

"What is it, my child?"

"But, first promise me."

"I promise."

"Then, you remember Harold Haxon, the day he called to see us, in Baltimore, asked you for the Black Crescent?"

She paused and looked quickly at him. He was calmly listening.

"Well?" he said.

"Now, father, won't you tell me what he wanted with it?"

"I do not know more than you, Eola. I believe he but acted upon the dictation of another."

"And who was that other?"

"I can not say. I can scarce imagine he was set to it by Louise Ternor; she must have died. I have neither seen nor heard any thing of her for a long, long while!"

"The fortune-teller," suggested Eola.

"Perhaps."

"But that is not the favor I would ask," she hesitated. "I want to see the Crescent."

He was more calm, as their conversation touched upon the mysterious article, than she had dared to hope for.

"And why do you wish to see it?" he asked.

"Oh!—because," A woman's reason in the dark.

"You have it upon your arm."

"I know I have. But you have told me so much of the Crescent, how it came to us, why I have it pricked upon my arm, that now I want to see it."

"It is but the original device of what is on your arm," he said, evasively.

"So you have told me before. I do not doubt it."

"It gleams with rarest jewels; is made of jet; its value in money would be hard to compute."

"That, too, you have already told me."

"I have it safe," as if he would deviate from her request. "I brought it with me. I dared not trust it in my library, in Baltimore, for it had been discovered, and there were those who would steal it from me."

"Was that why you were so anxious to be alone in your library the night I came to you, up-stairs, and found you bleeding?" Eola shuddered.

Remembrance of that night could never be erased from her mind. Its fearful mysteries, the singular behavior of her father, his thin, ghost-like face; the dismissal of Austin Burns; the conflicting thoughts that had robbed her of sleep, and kept her, through the long hours, until morning, wakeful, restless, uneasy—all was so vividly impressed upon her, that, when she recalled it, a clammy chill crept over her.

"Yes," said he, "they had discovered its hiding-place."

"They? Who?"

"There must have been more than one—you know there was a woman and a man—else, who struck me when I held Wat Blake—"

He stopped short.

Eola knew nothing of the dreadful scene that had transpired on that night in the third-story room; he had almost betrayed himself.

"There was more than one," he finished. "But you are forgetting what I asked. I want to see the Crescent. Will you not show it to me?"

"Curb your curiosity, Eola—"

"No, father, I can not. I want to see

me courage! I see through your kind, loving intent; but there is one thing—you forget that there is other danger than that which threatens through Harold Haxon. My wronged wife, your mother, poor, ill-treated Bertha, would punish me for my past wickedness. And I deserve it—yes, I deserve it







## REMEMBRANCE.

BY S. M. FRAZIER.

"Tis said that dreams of infancy are sweet,  
When fancy robes the mind of innocence;  
When hope and stern reality do meet,  
The then ambition rests on opulence.  
None there are but some strong passions govern—  
Better he who lives for no design were dead:  
How few can their own mind or thoughts discern!  
We live, and yet our life's an empty void.  
Alas! mine own thoughts will not be controlled;  
But oft a kindred spirit they unfold.  
I think of one that's passed away—and dream  
I hear that voice, whose hallowed accents prove,  
To a heart thus cold to passion's tendrest theme,  
Fuel to exhausted flames—the flames of love!  
How few of life's vain dreams are realized:  
Sorrow, alas! by acts our own we bring;  
And now, when present once, like something  
prized,  
In every bosom lacked—Hopes' most cruel sting.  
Oh, God! like faith in our declining years,  
One comfort thou hast given—'Tis MEMORY and  
TEARS.

## How he was Checkmated.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

SHE was wondrous fair, and one could easily have mistaken her for some marble statue as she stood there, motionless and pallid as death itself, just where a wide, white banner of moonlight streamed down from the January sky.

From afar, in the dancing saloon where Judge Carlyn's guests mostly were assembled, came low, bewitching strains of melody; nearer, occasional murmurs of voices in gay laughter or merry badinage were borne to her ear. Once she heard a man's voice inquiring for her of his partner as they promenaded past her hiding-place—"Where can Miss Islington have gone?"

She smiled, as though she heard the question, and then, when the smile faded, there returned an intense white agony on her pure, classic features, and one could have seen, had they been at hand, that her nails were almost purple from the fierce pressure of her interlaced fingers.

I said she heard the chance remark from her "hiding-place." That was true; she was hiding—away from the crowd, and the enjoyment—away from the world; and could she have done so, she would have fled from herself that night, for time and eternity, so sore was she stricken with a blow whose cruelty was only exceeded by its suddenness.

Like a statue she stood back of the thick red curtain that shut off the large bay window into a little world of its own; and, with the cold, pitiless moonlight adding a ghostly glory to her dead white dress, and the gleaming pearls on her fair throat and wrists.

She was thinking—if the wild, tumultuous surging of agony through her brain could be called thought—trying to realize that she was herself, Adele Islington, the heiress and beauty, whose life had been cloudless as a summer sky until now.

She wondered how many ages ago it had been since she stood before her dressing-mirror and smiled proudly back at the splendid woman she saw, in her trailing skirts of fleecy point D'Alencon over the dead white silk, with the ropes of pearls of fabulous prices, that gleamed like frozen tears against her fair, white flesh.

She remembered, as though an Eternity's ocean rolled between her, how her black eyes had been radiant with hope, joy and love; how every pulse bounded with delightful life, and, above all, how the thought that she would please Chantry St. Pierre, had made the wild heart-beats.

But now, she was suddenly petrified; she felt almost terrified as she realized how awful a darkness followed the sudden extinguishing of the light; she feared she would die in the struggle for peace. So, with her love but one hour dead, Adele Islington, stunned and stricken, made up her mind that since Chantry St. Pierre had been false to her, and her own best friend, her only relative left in all the wide world, Tessa Hurst, had supplanted her, there was little left to live for.

There could be no possible mistake about it; with her own ears she had heard it all; with her own eyes had seen the kisses exchanged, and the love that looked out of her lover's eyes to another woman.

It had been by chance, Adele had just finished a redowa with Captain Arison, and had slipped away to this moonlight bay-window for a moment's quiet and rest. Chantry St. Pierre and Tessa Hurst had sauntered past, and then took a seat in a shadowy corner, where a bronze Mars seemed them partially. Then Adele had got her death-wound; then she had heard her betrothed lover, to whom she had turned as the flowers to the light, swear his love was for Tessa Hurst, and Tessa Hurst alone.

Adele heard him speak, almost scornfully, of herself, and listened to her fair, violet-eyed cousin laugh as St. Pierre told her how much finer and lovelier and sweeter she was, in her girlish, dimpled beauty, than the maturer charms of Adele Islington.

Tessa had murmured a faint disapproval of his eager words, reminding him how Adele had loved him, how rich she was, and how utterly penniless she, herself, would always be.

But St. Pierre had stopped her objections with a kiss, and before they went away, Adele had heard him beg and implore for a favorable answer that very night; adding, in his eagerness, that, whether it were or no, yes, he had fully decided never to marry Adele Islington.

Somebody or other discovered her retreat, or she might have stood there—she knew not, or cared not, how long. But the wound must be covered now, for a while at least, and steeling every nerve and muscle in her body, Adele went back among the flowers and the dancers, only a trifle paler than was natural, only wondering whether or not it was herself who danced, and bowed, and smiled.

Chantry St. Pierre was not the only man, among the scores that watched Tessa Hurst as she walked up and down the piazza of the West End that still, sultry July night, who mentally declared she was wondrously beautiful.

And she was perfect—as perfect as a warm, pink-tinted complexion, purple-blue eyes, sunny-gold hair, and a dimpled, pearl-toothed mouth could make her.

She had taken great pains with herself lately—since Adele Islington's death had occurred so suddenly, while she was on a journey to the West; she was heiress now to all the Islington property, and, naturally a beauty, naturally utterly devoid of heart, she queened it right despotically among the scores who worshipped at her shrine.

Tessa, of course, had donned deepest mourning for "poor, dear Adele," while

her heart exulted and gloated because she was dead, and because mourning was so becoming to her.

That had happened in March; and now, in these hot summer nights, Tessa allowed herself a "little latitude," as she called it, and laid aside her strict mourning dresses, and bewitched Long Branch with her white neck and arms that gleamed from under the green and lace dresses.

Every day Chantry St. Pierre was growing more and more infatuated with her—he had haunted her daily in New York, and had now followed her to the sea-side, fearfully jealous lest another should snatch the jewel he so coveted. He never remembered, in those sunny days, that another had been heart-broken for him; he utterly forgot how Adele Islington had calmly, frigidly returned him his plighted troth, with such stormy woe in her eyes, and such proud scorn in her manner.

And then, after she had gone away, there came the telegram of her decease—"Heart-disease," so that had been the end of it all, and he was freer than air to win Tessa Hurst, if he could.

There it was—if he could; for she would give him no answer to his passionately urged suit; she wooed him on and on to the very verge of bliss, then dashed him down to the depths of despair. Still he worshipped her; and now, as he watched her from his distant chair on the hotel veranda, as she walked along on Senator Delamain's arm, her violet-blue eyes beaming in liquid beauty, her sweet mouth just parted in the tiniest smile, he dashed away his cigar, and, with a mental oath to have his fate decided that very hour, walked forth to meet it—and Tessa Hurst.

She greeted him with her sweetest smile, and when he reminded her she had promised to walk with him on the beach at nine, she gracefully excused herself from the gallant, gray-haired senator, and linked her arm through St. Pierre's, with a pretty little familiar confidence.

"Tessa," he said, almost the minute they were out of earshot of the other promenaders, "I have come for no other reason than to have what I deserve—a final answer from you. I will have it, Tessa, now or never; but, oh, Tessa! do not doom me to eternal misery!"

His voice was deep and almost whispering, so intensely earnest he was. She laughed lightly, and glanced up in his solemn dark face.

"You deliberately wish to risk the hazard of the die? Well, Chantry, I've your answer ready."

He pressed the round arm that lay against him; but the fast-gathering darkness prevented him from reading the expression on her face, save the glimmer in her bright eyes.

"You are a darling, Tessa! Tell me quickly you will be my wife, and whether the ring shall be diamonds or pearls."

His voice was joyous and ecstatic now, and it brought a faint curl to Tessa Hurst's lips.

"Chantry, neither diamonds nor pearls. I shall not marry you!"

Short, crisp, pitiless the words came, cutting like hail-stones.

He fairly staggered, as though some one had dealt him a blow.

"What—WHAT, Tessa!"

"Are you surprised, then? I thought you knew that, since I have money and position of my own, I should look far higher than a city lawyer. Of course, when I was poor, I would gladly have been your wife, but now—well," and she shrugged her pretty shoulders, "you know what I mean."

Heaven! how utterly devoid of pity she was! how keenly she cut him through and through; and there he stood, so awfully disappointed and sore-hearted.

He could think of no word to say; he only knew he had staked his all—his honor to the dead, when he now suddenly believed he had murdered, and had lost!

And Tessa actually enjoyed it all, as she stood there on the shore, tapping one restless foot on the sands, and folding and unfolding her starchy fan.

"I'll go back now," she said, at length, coolly, and, of course, for appearance's sake, he had to walk beside her.

She was so triumphant, her very step was more elastic than ever, and Chantry saw the sparkle in her eyes as the lights from the hotel fell on her face. At the foot of the veranda a servant met them, with the message that some one had requested a moment's conversation in the parlor—only a moment.

It was somewhat strange that Chantry St. Pierre and Tessa Hurst should be asked for together; but both were too absorbed in the event that had just transpired to note that. So they merely walked leisurely through the corridor to the nearly-deserted parlor, whose half-closed door, as Chantry pushed it wide open, revealed—Adele Islington!

Chantry started; Tessa gave a little scream, and clung in terror to her escort, her eyes, wide open in surprised fear, gazing at the unexpected appearance.

"There is no cause for alarm, Tessa. The time, however, has come when I desire to undeceive you. Will you sit down, while I explain?"

It was Adele's own voice, sweet and cold as of yore.

The words will be but few that I need to tell you. I originated and circulated the report of my death—for what purpose, you both know. I think, Mr. St. Pierre, am I to congratulate you? Tessa, you are not disappointed because you are no longer 'heiress of Islington'?"

There was faint scorn in her words, and Tessa, in the sudden overthrow of all her prospects, turned suddenly away, that the man she had so insulted might not see the chagrin and wrath in her face.

Miss Hurst looks higher than a city lawyer, Miss Islington. For myself, I have the grace to admit I deserve it all."

He bowed himself away, and Tessa knew then that it was not only he, but herself, who was checkmated.

## Loss and Gain.

BY L. A. SILSBEE.

THIS party on the piazza at Oakwood were evidently excited about something. I heard the murmur of their eager voices as I came along the path returning from my walk, and as I came up the steps, I caught Bert Cliffe's words:

"She is very beautiful, every one says. I have never had the honor of her acquaintance."

"Have you seen her?" asked Victor Pruth, eagerly, turning to me.

"Her—whom?" I questioned.

"Miss Worth. She arrived this morning."

"I have not, but expect to this evening. I am impatient for the time," I replied, as I arranged the flowers I had gathered.

"Lochiel, Lochiel, beware of the day!" exclaimed Nettie Cliffe, in a mock-tragic manner. "Miss Worth is perfectly irresistible. Half an hour after her appearance, we shall all be disconsolate wall-flowers."

"False wizard, avant; whence comes your knowledge?" said I, laughing.

"'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore, and, as evening events cast their shadows before," answered Nettie Cliffe, solemnly. "Let every lady beware, or her gallant knight may prove unfaithful."

I looked down at the opal ring that sparkled on the first finger of my left hand, with a little unconscious smile. It was Hamilton Waite's gift. While I wore that I cared nothing for Audrey Worth's beauty; I had no fears that he could prove faithless.

That evening, as I sat in the shadow of the heavy curtains, listening to the conversation near me, Bert Cliffe joined me. We were chatting idly, when an exclamation behind us caused us both to look up.

A woman was entering—a woman exceedingly fair to look upon, with heavy masses of dark hair, and a ripe, red mouth, that might be cruel if the woman's face was indicative of her character. It was Miss Worth.

"For populi is right," said Bert Cliffe. "Audrey Worth is beautiful, and," he added, meditatively, "she is cruel also."

I hardly heard him. I was looking at Miss Worth. She was standing in the midst of a circle of friends, talking animatedly. Suddenly a swift change passed over her face, and I saw the white hand that held her fan tremble. The next instant she was bowing calmly to Hamilton Waite—the old, indifferent look on her face again.

"Nonsense, Bert!" exclaimed Nettie Cliffe, impatiently; "what is there in that beautiful, regal woman to warrant such an assertion as that? You never saw her until this moment."

"Perhaps it is the sunset of life that gives me mystical lore," answered her brother, laughing. "The beautiful Bengal tiger might look like that woman. Time and tide brings all things to light. We shall see."

Half an hour later I was surprised to see Victor Pruth tele-a-tele with Miss Worth. Victor Pruth was a tall, silent man, with dark, fathomless eyes, and a grave, earnest mouth, where every line was perfect. It never occurred to me that Victor Pruth to flirt—hence my surprise.

"What does it mean?" asked Fannie Stuart, wondering.

Nettie Cliffe shrugged her shoulders. "I never could quite understand Mr. Pruth," she remarked; "he will always be a mystery. So dark, and grave, and silent—one can't help feeling, somehow, as if he were engaged in a conspiracy."

At present he is, said Bert Cliffe, with a glance at Hamilton Waite, that wandered off again to the couple in question, "and a worthy object he has in view, too; but," he added, with a glance of measurement at Audrey Worth, "he will fail."

"What do you mean, Bert? Is it an enigma?" queried Nettie Cliffe, in an annoyed tone. "Why can't you speak plainly? One would imagine that Victor Pruth was plotting, and you were an accomplice. You are talking metaphysically."

Bert Cliffe laughed.

"That I have not time to bring to the test, and I the matter will reward," he quoted. "Victor Pruth would 'avoid what is to come.'"

In the days that followed I often thought of his words, and asked myself the question Fannie Stuart had asked: "What does it mean?" I could ask, but I could not answer it.

Audrey Worth reigned like a queen among the guests at Oakwood. Her slight, yet was law, for her to express an opinion on any subject under discussion was to settle the matter forever. The laws of Drace were not more unalterable than Audrey Worth's decision. Victor Pruth continued a mystery. He was always near her, always at hand to perform any slight office, or offer any assistance she might need. And yet, watching him closely, I was convinced he did not love her. There was no lighting of his eye at her approach, no softening of his musical voice as he addressed her. I said to myself that it was well—Audrey Worth could never appreciate the love of a man like Victor Pruth. Yet Victor Pruth never stooped to trifle: what did it mean?

Hamilton Waite, too, was changed. Not a change that I could define. He spoke as usual; he was apparently as tender, yet a certain vague something in his manner, an undefinable restlessness and abstraction, gave me pain.

I did not associate the change with Miss Worth. He rarely spoke to her, except in common courtesy, and often, I utterly unconscious of her presence. I had no idea of the cause, yet it troubled me.

I sat on the piazza one day, trying to read. Nearly all the party were away on an excursion, and the house was almost deserted. Fifteen minutes before, I had seen Audrey Worth enter the parlor and throw herself on the sofa, where she still lay, occupied with a book. I was sitting silently, watching the humming-birds come and go in the garden, and wondering at the change that seemed to have fallen on us, when the parlor door swung open, and through the open window I saw Hamilton Waite enter; then, seeing for the first time the figure on the sofa, he stopped short, while a transient change passed over his face.

"Pardon me," he said, with a bow, and I fancied his voice trembled slightly; "I did not know there was any one here."

He turned to go, when Audrey Worth rose suddenly.

"I beg you will stay," she exclaimed, and the liquid tones trembled. "Oh, Hamilton, have you forgotten?"

He turned irresolutely, and advanced a step toward her.

"My memory is my curse," he said, bitterly; then turned abruptly and left the room.

His face was pale, but, as the door closed behind him, a smile wreathed Audrey Worth's lips. She went to the piano presently, and ran her fingers over the keys. I listened. It was "Miriam's Song of Triumph."

I was completely puzzled. In my infinite faith in Hamilton Waite, I never thought this beautiful woman was aught to him. I was his betrothed wife, and, as such, I trusted him entirely. But what did it mean?

mean?—the passionate inquiry—the bitter answer?

I felt troubled. That night, at Mrs. Putnam's party, I gained an explanation.

Tired and warm after the last gallop, Victor Pruth and myself had gone into the conservatory. Sitting in the bay-window, talking, we did not notice a couple approaching till, half hidden by some tall plants, they stood close beside us.

"I was to blame, but I had hoped you had forgiven me," the woman was saying, and, in the eager, passionate tones, I recognized Audrey Worth. "But I was wrong—you have forgotten."

"Yes, I have forgotten," answered Hamilton Waite, passionately, "forgotten that Vivian Clay is my betrothed wife, forgotten that I have no right to speak thus to you, forgotten every thing save that I love you! Audrey; I will give up every thing for you—you must be mine."

I saw him stoop and kiss her; I saw her return the caress, saw them move away and leave the room, and then I looked at Victor Pruth. I felt dumb—dazed by what I had witnessed.

He looked at me pityingly—he bent over me.

"Poor child," he murmured, tenderly, "it has fallen—the blow that I tried to avert—that I would have died to shield you from!"

He threw open the window, and when I had breathed the fresh air I recovered my stunned senses. I looked at the opal ring. Its gleam and glimmer were gone, and the prisoned fire in its heart was a dull ash color.

Half an hour later, as I sat watching the dancers, though my thoughts were of other things, Nettie Cliffe joined me.

"What do you think of my prophecy now?" she exclaimed, with a laughing glance toward Audrey Worth and Hamilton Waite, who led the nearest set of Lancers. "Your knight has followed suite of the rest"—then, seeing my face and suspecting something of the truth—"oh, Vivian, is it possible! Pardon my nonsense. Ah, there comes Bert, escorting Melpomene. She is as wise as Solomon, and as cruel as the grave. Au revoir."

She passed on, and the woman she had called Melpomene was introduced to me as Mrs. Farquar. She was dressed in richest fabric, and ablaze with jewels.

"The rooms are excessively warm," she said, fanning herself languidly.

I gave a polite assent.

Mr. Waite and Miss Worth make a handsome couple," she began presently, surveying the couple in question critically.

"It seems strange to see them intimate again. Last season at Newport they were all but, if not quite, engaged; but, something came between them and they left in high dudgeon—he to New York and she somewhere else. It was said she was intensely piqued because she lost him. Every one thought it was his property she wanted. You know he has a princely fortune, but he was desperately in love, and of course never suspected her of any such motive. I have heard recently that they have found the story that broke their engagement was a falsehood."

So she ran on during the time she sat near me. A gentleman claimed her for a promenade presently, and I heard the rustle of her departure with a sigh of relief. So he had never loved me—it had been all false-ness and perjury! The discovery made it none the less bitter.

The next morning I entered the back-parlor. Five minutes before, I had seen Hamilton Waite enter, and I knew he was there alone. I slipped the opal from my finger, and laid it in his hand.

"I have discovered all," I said, steadily. "Be happy with her if you can. I can forgive you if you can forgive yourself."

And then I walked away, not caring to see his face or hear his words.

It was a year and a half before I was again at Oakwood.

Returning then from a protracted stay in the West, I surprised everybody except my hostess, by my sudden appearance.

As usual, there was a household of guests at Oakwood, but at the time of my arrival they were nearly all gone on an excursion to the lake. Nettie Cliffe met me with her old-time vivacity.

"We are all here, as if it was but yesterday you left us," she said, laughing, "but we are changed some. You know Bert was married?"

"I had heard of it."

"Yes, and Fannie Stuart is too. Her husband is an Englishman and a lord—so Fanny is my lady, now."

"And I suppose queen Audrey and Mr. Waite have united their fortunes?"

Nettie shook her head. You remember the crash in Wall street last year? Hamilton Waite lost gold and stock and government bonds, and he lost Audrey Worth also. She jilted him without a pang, and three weeks afterward, married Howard Cluett. He is a millionaire, but as old as Methuselah, and a perfect fright. Bert was right in saying she was cruel. Afterward it came out that Hamilton Waite had not lost as much as supposed, and he is long ago up to the old figure. If Audrey Worth has any regrets, no one would suspect it. She is not one to wear her heart in her sleeve. She sold herself regally, and for her the curtain has dropped. Her part of the drama is over."

Two weeks later, at Mrs. Hart's party, the last scene was enacted.

Flushed and breathless after the last redowa, Victor Pruth had left me in the bay window, and gone after an ice. Sitting there waiting, and listening to the music, I became conscious of Hamilton Waite's presence.

"Vivian Clay," he said, in a low tone, "two years ago, I did you a bitter wrong. You said you could forgive me if I could forgive myself. I can not; yet I have suffered much, and I come to you to ask if you can so far forgive me from your woman's heart as to be my wife. I do not deserve that you should be, yet I have dared to ask you."

At that moment Victor Pruth appeared.

I put my hand in his.

"This is my betrothed husband," I said, simply. "That is my answer."

"I have sinned, and truly sin is its own avenger," murmured Hamilton Waite, and in the white, disappointed face he carried away, I read the depth and bitterness of his punishment.

MISERY assails riches, as lightning does the highest towers. Or, as a tree that is heavily laden with fruit, breaks its own boughs, so do riches destroy the virtues of their possessor.

Adria, the Adopted:  
OR,  
The Mystery of Ellesford Grange.

AN AMERICAN ROMANCE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,  
AUTHOR OF "BRANDED," "SEA HARVEST," "THE  
PHIA'S BRAVERY," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XIII.

HASTINGS left the Grange full of hopeful anticipation. It would be months perhaps before he could return, but he had a high aim now to strive for, and this time of separation was rendered more endurable since it was given him as so much opportunity to mount toward the level he had determined to attain. Though Mr. Ellesford had objected to a formal betrothal between the lovers, he put forward no interdiction or limit to their communications.

And Adria saw him depart firm in her faith in his ability to accomplish the task before him, already spanning the mystic future with bright hopes of the time when they should walk hand in hand, with no fear of parting until death's severance.

Mr. Ellesford took an early opportunity to inform her of the relation now existing between himself and Valeria. He had dreaded the effect of the revelation. He was haunted by a dim unconsciousness that he was doing his adopted daughter some wrong in thus taking another love to his heart.

Adria was taken completely unawares. She had never anticipated such a result. The time had been so short since Valeria's introduction to the Grange, the discrepancy of ages was so great, and more than either, the supposition had never entered her mind during all the years since her mother's death that any other woman could ever usurp that vacant place. She was surprised and grieved, and under the influence of the first shock could not but betray herself.

"Oh, papa!" she cried, reproachfully, "how can you?"

His own conscience might venture to doubt the wisdom of his resolution, but he would not brook resentment from another—not even from Adria.

"My daughter forgets that she herself is anticipating a time when she shall leave me. Is it so strange that I should not wish to be alone and lonely in my old age?"

"Papa, dear, you know that I will never leave you. It is all so different. Valeria does not love you, papa; she never will care for you as I do."

"Really, Adria," he said, coldly, as he seldom spoke to her, "I can understand that this announcement was unlooked for by you, but I can not permit you to impute any but loving motives to my future wife. You shall be provided for all the same."

"Oh, papa!" she cried, again, hurt that he should so misconstrue her words. "Indeed—indeed, I am not so selfish. I was thinking only of you."

"Then you will not envy me that which will add to my happiness, my daughter?"

"Oh, no, no! Not if it will make you truly happier."

He kissed her and sent her away, glad to have the interview over.

She went immediately to Valeria's room, with a vague hope which she did not stop to analyze. A hope like one striving to be awakened from a tantalizing dream, or finding it true, that the other might have accepted the confiding old man from truly worthy emotions.

Valeria was expecting her. She was aware of the interview and its purpose. She remained apparently unconscious awaiting the other's tactics. Adria was too thoroughly in earnest to approach her subject lightly.

"You are going to marry papa?" she asked.

"He has told you, then?" calmly. "Yes!"

"Why?"

Valeria had not expected this straightforward questioning. Woman of the world as she was, it disconcerted her. With the girl's clear eye upon her she could not declare that it was for love, much as she might wish to preserve that illusion.

"Why?" she repeated. "Because—because he asked me."

Then came the thought, she had virtually gained her object. Was it worth her while baffling the judgment which was trying her? It could make no difference in the end attained.

"I had heard of it."

She turned her fair face squarely within Adria's view, and met her gaze with calm, cold eyes. Her lip curled with a smile half-mocking, half-triumphant.

"Selfish and cruel!" declared Adria, her hope gone. "May God deal with you, Valeria Walton, as you do by him."

Preparations were immediately commenced for the marriage. It was Mr. Ellesford's wish that it should be consummated at an early date and in a strictly private manner. Much as Valeria loved display she made no demur. Perhaps she consoled herself with the reflection that when she was fairly installed mistress of the Grange, she would control both the liberty and means of rendering her life gay as she could desire.

The second week after his departure, Adria received a long letter from Kenneth. He was quite strong now and fortune was already smiling upon him. He had



Adria was at the piano softly accompanying herself to an old love song. Some happy reflection had brought a heightened glow to her cheeks, a luminous expression to her eyes.

Reginald, letting himself in quietly as was his wont, stood regarding her while she remained unaware of his presence. Her hands fell away from the keys and she turned to face his pleading, passionate gaze.

"Adria, pity me! I feel all the love for which

"I'd lay me down and die."

For your sweet sake. But, oh! my love, I can not live without you! It will drive me mad, or worse, unless I can know that I have some hope. I will wait, if you only will not turn your heart away from me. I will yet win your love. My love, my darling, do not drive me to sinful despair!"

He was kneeling at her feet, imprisoning her hands in a clasp that almost made her scream with pain.

"Reginald, this is worse than folly. I beseech you, do not utter another word. Your persistency can only succeed in ending our friendship."

"Listen to me, Adria. You, and you only, can save me from despair. I love you as no other man can or will. Don't turn against me and I will win you fairly, but by fair means or foul I will have you yet. You don't know how a man can make any woman love him, Adria! Oh, my darling! Give me some assurance, ever so little, and I shall be so patient and so faithful that yourself shall deem me worthy of you at last."

"If you love me as you say, be generous and leave me. A brave spirit never persecutes a helpless woman."

He sprang to his feet, a quick flush mantling his cheeks.

"Adria, once more, will you give me a hope of some time honorably claiming you? Reflect, before you answer me. You have seen the depth of my love. Take care that you don't tempt my hate. You don't know of what I am capable for either good or ill. Do you treat me tenderly, have pity for me, and I will make myself a better man than I have ever been. Tell me that you will Adria, if you would save yourself and me from sorrow, if no worse."

She shuddered beneath his gaze. His handsome face illuminated with ardent love must have appealed to her irresistibly had she not worn the shield of another's wedding. Though his face was full of pleading, his lip was set in a hard curve, betraying his immovable resolve.

"What can I say or do?" she asked him. "I can never love you, Reginald Templeton. Go away from me. Never speak to me again unless you can forget all of this. I was lenient with you before, but you have forfeited the confidence I placed in you. Let me retain at least my respect for you. Show yourself a true man; leave me to myself and my own peace."

"Which means your own love?" he asked, his passion suddenly leaving him cold and calm.

She met his gaze unflinchingly. Her love acknowledged and returned, she would have felt no false shame in proclaiming it to the world had there been need.

"Yes," she replied. "You know now how impossible it is that you can ever be to me more than a friend—not that, if you persist in this mad course."

"And I swear that no other man shall ever claim you. You have driven me to it. Let the consequences rest with you alone. Some time you may kneel to me for mercy and for love as I have this day plead with you. When that time comes I will know whether I love or hate you most. I can't tell which now, but either will work to the same end."

He left her then, touching his hat with courtly grace as he passed the window a moment later; but the quiet white rage upon his face frightened her more than all his threatening words had done.

CHAPTER XIV.

Colonel Templeton and his son again confronted each other in the bright, pleasant library.

They seemed for the moment to have exchanged dispositions. The latter, calm and cold, with no emotion perceptibly stamped upon his pale features; the former pacing the room restlessly in a petulant anger he seldom displayed.

"You have acted like a fool," he said. "Why couldn't you be content to follow my instructions? You have set the girl against you now, lost a vantage-ground you will not easily regain."

"I beg your pardon, I thoroughly understand my own footing, and am now prepared to hesitate at no means to forward my designs. I have kept my part of our agreement by giving you the exact position, and soliciting your further aid. With or without it I shall accomplish my aim."

Colonel Templeton was not wishing to arouse this independent spirit.

"Of course I shall render my assistance to the uttermost, since my promise is given to that effect," he hastened to say. "But you must not upset my plans by your rash and headless. Give me a little time and I will warrant you if not a willing, at least a submissive bride."

Reginald looked at him keenly.

"You have some deeper interest at stake than the mere furtherance of this alliance," he said.

The father turned upon him sharply, and with evident annoyance.

"Is it not enough that I have espoused your cause?" he demanded. "Our motives, if not identical, will pull together."

Turning to the door abruptly he imagined he heard the rustle of garments, but a hasty survey of the adjoining apartment revealed no one.

Reginald, striding out through the wide hall-way, felt a clinging grasp upon his arm, saw a white, agonized face lifted to his. It was his mother. She drew him hastily into the empty morning room, closing and locking the door behind them.

"I overheard all, accidentally. I beg you to believe," she said, speaking rapidly. "Oh, my son, give up your purpose. Promise me that you will never seek to ally yourself with an Ellesford!"

"You are nervous, mother," he said, kindly, for whatever his faults may have been he was universally tender with her. "You can not expect to keep your boy always, you know."

Reginald, implore you. Go where you will, woe any except one connected with that house. There is a gulf there you must not attempt to cross. If you love Adria Ellesford, crush the feeling from your heart if you would not have it bring

retribution on you who are yet innocent. If you covet the broad possessions she will inherit, for the love of Heaven put such temptation from you. Better for you to wander a beggar through the land than to touch a farthing from that source."

"Mother, dear, we will not talk of it now! If you overheard our conversation you heard my determination also. You know that a Templeton never swerves from his purpose."

She shuddered visibly. "Oh, my son, listen! See, I will kneel to you, pray to you, only give up all thought of her."

"Never, while I live!"

Her voice sank to a hoarse whisper. "Reginald! Reginald! There is a crime which has raised a barrier between you. A deadly sin which has made my life a curse. Do not, by your own act, bring down the brand upon you!"

"You speak enigmas, mother," he said, chillingly. "I do not attempt to penetrate your meaning. But if Hades itself stood between her and me, I would not relinquish my aim."

Colonel Templeton was steadily occupied all that morning. In the afternoon, rode slowly to the Grange.

Mr. Ellesford had returned and was at liberty. He met his visitor cordially, as a man who had a warm claim upon his gratitude.

"Let me order your horse put away, and do you dine with us," he insisted. But Colonel Templeton declined.

"No," he said. "I have called on business purely. A rather delicate matter, I admit, but still with us a business affair."

Mr. Ellesford looked with inquiry, and awaited further development. The other continued, indicating the view from the room where they sat.

"Your grounds cover a slope which can be surpassed for both beauty and fertility nowhere in Maryland."

The other bowed with gratified delight. He was proud of his ancestral estate.

"And the Firs is not a contemptible piece of property?"

"On the contrary it is very fine. You should congratulate yourself on its possession."

"What would you say to joining the two?"

Mr. Ellesford was surprised and puzzled. The other explained.

"My son has plunged headlong into a romantic passion for your daughter. We who have passed the heyday of youth can afford to laugh at youthful folly, which in this case I think tends wisely. The advantageous results of such an alliance are obvious. For my part I strongly favor the move and have come to solicit your concurrence."

"My dear Templeton, nothing would give me greater pleasure were it possible. Unfortunately my daughter is already compromised."

"Irrevocably?"

Mr. Ellesford explained the circumstance and condition.

"At most, a girlish partiality. I am more inclined to think it the result of pique. Adria certainly encouraged my son's attentions, but he unfortunately provoked her displeasure. No doubt she is even now repenting the rupture between them."

"I can not think you are right. Adria is not apt to act hastily. I own frankly that I should be best pleased with the consummation you propose, but the decision does not rest with me. She is yet free to act at her own discretion. If your son can succeed in winning her you may be assured of my consent."

"And otherwise?"

"I have already assured Hastings of my approval if they both remain constant."

Colonel Templeton leaned toward him, speaking in a confidential tone.

"You can exercise your authority toward inducing her to accept Reginald."

The other drew back rather stiffly.

"Colonel Templeton, I consider the marital relation of too great importance to be unwillingly enforced. My daughter's choice shall be mine."

Colonel Templeton's lip curled scornfully.

"There may be even more important considerations in this case. Will you be kind enough to examine this?"

He drew a document from his pocket. It was addressed to Jonathan Sharpe, and contained explicit directions to press the immediate payment of claims, amounting to the aggregate of fifty thousand dollars, against the firm of Ellesford & Co.

"You have no chance of meeting it," he said, coldly. "and the slightest alarm will bring as much more upon you from other sources."

Mr. Ellesford returned the paper, pale to the lips.

"It will bring ruin upon us. It might better have come before."

"Ellesford & Co. take advantage of the bankrupt code," rehearsed the other, tauntingly.

"Colonel Templeton, you mistake me. I have a last resource to preserve our name from dishonor."

"You mean that you would first encumber the estate?"

"I would first sell the last inch of the Ellesford grounds!"

Colonel Templeton's face grew cruelly triumphant.

"If you were called upon to deliver up your stewardship?" he asked. "On what terms did you inherit the family wealth?"

Mr. Ellesford looked at him, not comprehending.

"Was it not in consideration of Hugh Ellesford's death without issue?"

"It was, certainly!"

"Unfortunately he left a son. I see you are surprised. You deemed him an unmarried man. That only goes to prove how well he kept his secret from his nearest relative and the world."

Joseph Ellesford was first amazed, then incredulous.

"It can not be," he declared.

"I can prove it beyond doubt. Do you realize the consequences should it be done, and the true heir produced?"

His confident tone carried conviction that his assertion was not made idly. Mr. Ellesford sunk back overcome by the prospect the future presented to him should this be true. Colonel Templeton regarded him with calm satisfaction. He knew his man, knew the easy nature which, shrinking from any thing tainting of worldly dishonor, might be influenced by a stronger will to a complicity, reprehensible in itself, but which would result apparently to his own benefit and do no one a suspected ill.

"Perhaps you would prefer to remain in blissful ignorance," resumed Templeton,

dropping his voice again to that confidential tone. "I have come here to-day as your friend, Ellesford. I have no desire to disturb your security. What I have made known need never go further; you and I should be able to keep the secret. Of one thing I can assure you. The real heir, your brother's son, has no notion of his station. He has been reared in a totally different sphere, and believes he belongs there. Co-operate with me and you remain safe; go against me, and find yourself a beggar and dishonored man."

Mr. Ellesford only stared at him, dumbly despairing.

"Give your daughter to my son in marriage, and all will be well. She will not refuse, knowing that your prosperity or ruin hangs upon her word."

The other put out his hands with a helpless, imploring gesture.

"Give me time. I am unmoved—I can not think. Go away. Let me think!"

Colonel Templeton drew out his watch.

"In a half-hour the mail leaves for Washington. I give you ten minutes in which to decide whether or no you will act with me. If not, Sharpe will receive his instructions by morning, and other consequences will follow."

Mr. Ellesford bowed his head upon his hands, his face livid and working convulsively. On the one hand was ruin, poverty, and the dishonor of his name; on the other, a wrong which was scarcely a wrong when the one against whom it was committed was no worse for it.

Adria, daintily reared and fondly cared for, rose before him. Then he seemed to see her haggard and worn, dragging out her bright young life in hopeless toil, suffering even for the common necessities of existence. Could he doom her to such a fate? Strange that he should think only of her—that he should wholly forget both himself and his bride that was to be. But for the time Valeria was blotted from his memory completely as if she had never been.

"Five minutes!" announced Colonel Templeton. "Be quick, my friend!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 85.)

## OLD GRIZZLY, The Bear-Tamer:

OR, THE  
WILD HUNTRESS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.  
BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS.  
AUTHOR OF "THE PHANTOM PRINCESS; OR, NED HAZEL, THE BOY TRAPPER," "THE BLACKFOOT QUEEN; OR, OLD NICK WHIFFLES IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH," ETC.

### CHAPTER XX.

#### THE WHITE HORSE AND HIS RIDE.

We left the Wild Huntress of the Mountains speeding away in the darkness, on the trail of the Avenger, whom, from some vague, uncertain idea that had possessed her disordered brain, she was so desirous of seeing.

So urgent appeared the necessity to her, that she could not rest quietly until the morning, when, as the bear-tamer had informed her, she would assuredly meet the man she sought at his ranch.

But the task she had entered upon was no easy one.

For the first time in her experience of the animal, the brown bear seemed inclined to disobey her commands. He appeared averse to following the trail, and when, as we have seen, the Avenger entered among the rocky foot-hills, and the trail thereby became obscure and difficult to follow, Brownie threw up, and began wandering here and there amid the bushes.

In vain the woman stormed and threatened, even going so far as to strike the brute savagely over the nose with the butt end of the switch she held—he would not pursue the trail.

But she would not return. She seemed possessed with a desire to be constantly on the move—restless and fretful as are those in her condition, at times—and hence she began a series of aimless wanderings over the country, with, apparently, no definite point in view. But she was at length abruptly aroused from her reverie.

The white horse, left to his own guidance, the reins hanging loosely on his neck, came to a stand within a small clump of bushes, a little removed from a spreading oak that grew out in open prairie, and quietly began nibbling the leaves and tender shoots within range.

How long she had been here, she knew not. A keen whistle, proceeding from the direction of the oak, brought her back to consciousness, and she was instantly all alive to what was going on around her.

Unsettled though her mind was, she was, nevertheless, always watchful of danger, and quick in plan and device to avoid it.

The peculiar life she had been leading for the last few years had made her entirely familiar with the arts of Indian warfare. She had, by her coolness and resources, avoided capture repeatedly, even under the most difficult circumstances, and she was now prepared to do so again, if the necessity arose.

Her quick ear instantly detected the character of the sound she had just heard. She knew it to be an Indian's signal to his fellow or fellows.

Gathering up the reins, she bent eagerly forward in her saddle and listened.

Again the whistle was repeated, this time away in front, apparently at some distance; and, almost echoing the sound, came the sharp, whip-like report of a rifle, and following that a yell of human agony.

The white horse, well used to such emergencies, stood steadily, nor did he shy when a dark figure, stooping low to the earth, shot past the thicket, within a few feet of his nose, and disappeared under the spreading branches of the oak that stood out in the prairie. There was, evidently, hot work for somebody going on. As yet it did not enter the Wild Huntress' mind that these might be Blackfoot warriors in pursuit of, or trying to surround, the man whom she was hunting. She had come this way, and why not he?

For a short time after the woman had seen the creeping figure making for the cover of the tree, a death-like silence brooded over the scene.

Not the faintest sound, for several minutes, broke the stillness; but, presently, the sound of stealthy footsteps were heard, and the Huntress became aware that some one was again on the move.

This time it was the figure of a white man she saw, and, looking yet closer, she discovered it was the man she was seeking! He was moving with extreme caution, glancing to the right and left, and behind,

as though fearing an ambush or sudden attack. Gathering up the reins anew, the woman was on the point of dashing from the thicket and again rescuing the man from a position that was plainly perilous, when again the sharp crack of a rifle broke the silence, this time coming from beneath the shadow of the oak.

Her first impulse was to glance toward the white man. She saw him fall, spring to his feet again, and, like a wounded panther, charge down on the treacherous savage who had fired the shot from the tree.

So quickly was all this done that she had no opportunity to make herself known. It will be remembered that, when the Avenger rushed upon the Indian at the oak, he suddenly discovered that he was being ambushed, and consequently turned and sped away into the gloom with the speed of a mettled horse.

Utterly regardless, as it would seem, of all consequences, the Wild Huntress dashed out of the thicket in swift pursuit.

She knew not why she wished to overtake this man. Had she been asked the reason, she could not have given it; and yet, so uncontrollable was the impulse, that she deliberately left safe cover, and rushed headlong into the midst of an infuriated war-party.

The condition of affairs stood thus: The Avenger was fleeing, closely pursued by the Blackfoot, who were, for a time, too much engrossed in the hope of recapturing their dread enemy to notice the mysterious white horse and his rider, who came swiftly on in the rear of all.

But, it could not long remain so.

The sharp stroke of the horse's hoofs upon a flinty piece of ground caused the hindmost warrior to glance behind, and, almost before they were aware of it, the steed and his fearless rider, backed by the brown bear, were right in their midst.

Half a dozen or more of the warriors instantly fell out of the chase, and, without offering her the slightest harm, surrounded and closed in, with a view of making her captive. But, as it proved, this was no easy task.

"Seize them, Brownie!" she exclaimed, sharply, as she reined in the white horse, and sat calmly gazing on the dusky figures that were gathered around.

Whether the bear was actuated by more than brute intelligence, or what not, he very bravely declined the attack. Half a dozen rifles would probably have given him their contents, and, while the whole tribe had fired at and into Sampson without apparent damage, the six balls would assuredly have been sufficient for a bear of Brownie's species.

But he "sidled" up to the white horse, and savagely showed his glistening teeth. Apparently forgetting the presence of the Indians, the Wild Huntress turned, in a perfect storm of fury, upon the bear.

But, in vain—he would not move an inch!

Cautiously the braves drew their line in upon the group. No weapon was lifted, for, in all the tribes lying west of the great river if we except the Diggers, there is not an Indian that can be induced to raise his hand against one whom they know, or think, to be deficient in reason.

At length, one of the warriors, more impatient than his fellows, stepped forward and laid his hands upon the bridle-rein. Then, indeed, was the spell by which the bear seemed possessed broken.

With a savage growl the beast sprang forward and grappled the Blackfoot.

So quickly and so unexpectedly was the action performed, that the warrior was taken entirely off his guard, and, before he could draw his knife, he was borne backward to the earth, the bear clinging to the hold he had taken upon the red-man's shoulder.

A fierce struggle, a rapid whirl of the combatants, a long, keen yell of agony, and the bear released his hold and ran back to his original position, leaving the warrior writhing upon the ground, with the blood pouring in torrents from a gaping wound in the throat.

Still the Indians did not fire, so great was their respect, or rather fear of consequences that might ensue did they harm one, or ought that belonged to one, so especially under the Great Spirit's protection.

"Let the Women of the Mountain speak to her bear," said a warrior. "Does she not see that the tomahawk and scalping-knife are still in the Blackfoot's belts?"

"Seize them again, Brownie!" cried the Wild Huntress, who seemed terribly excited by what had occurred. And she rapidly unsling her light rifle, preparatory to beginning the attack herself.

The bear had been growling and snarling since the attack and appeared ready to renew it at the command from his mistress.

"Seize them!" she again called; and now obedient Brownie rushed upon the nearest brave and sought to fasten upon him as he had done with the other.

This, in the face of their proffer of friendship, was more than even Indian superstition could stand.

As the bear sprang forward, three or four rifles cracked, and, with a roar of pain and rage, terrible to hear, the brown bear reared and clawed the air with his forearms; and then, staggering a moment, fell heavily to the earth.

Quick as thought the Indians sprang forward to secure the Wild Huntress, but she was even quicker than they.

As the leading Blackfoot grasped the rein she suddenly threw her weight upon the bit, causing the white steed to rear aloft, striking wildly with his sharp hoofs, and forcing the Indian to loose his hold.

As the horse came down he sprang forward, overturning those who stood in front, and long before they had in any degree recovered from the confusion natural to such an event, he, with his fearless rider, had disappeared over a swell in the prairie!

For nearly a mile the headlong race continued.

The woman was terribly angered at the loss of her bear, which from long association she had come to regard with the deepest affection possible for a human being to feel for one of the brute creation.

During that brief ride she scarcely comprehended the fact that the animal was actually dead; but, when free from signs of pursuit, and the anxiety consequent thereon, she recalled the event as it had transpired, and as the stern fact that her favorite was no longer by her side dawned upon her, she burst into a passion of tears—the first she had shed in many years.

During all the long days of her voluntary seclusion in her mountain cavern, the horse and bear had been her only companions, and it can not be wondered at that she had learned to love them both.

So great was the rage and sorrow of the Wild Huntress, that could she have determined in what direction her enemies were, she would certainly have returned and opened battle single-handed and alone.

But, her mind, always more or less confused, was doubly so at that moment. She remembered nothing of the direction whence she came, nor where she was, and, after trying to ascertain from the surroundings in what particular locality she was, and failing to do so, she adopted her usual plan, and throwing down the reins, left the white steed to go where ever he wished.

The intelligent animal took the back trail.

### CHAPTER XXI.

#### A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

"God bless the boy!" exclaimed the bear-tamer, grasping the hand of Leaping Elk, who, it will be remembered, joined the party of white men at the bear camp, shortly after the rescue of Alfred Badger. "He is a trump, the lad, ar, dang my ole buckskins ef he hain't!"

"You are a noble fellow," added the Avenger. "I hate all of your tribe, for they have wronged me greatly, but I find no such feeling in my heart for Leaping Elk."

Alfred Badger turned to the youth, extending both hands, which were eagerly grasped by the Indian boy. The young hunter drew him closely in his arms, bestowing an affectionate embrace, saying, at the same time:

"My Indian brother is young in years but he has the heart of a Blackfoot warrior. When Leaping Elk goes on the war-path, there will be mourning in the lodges of his enemies."

A greater or more acceptable compliment it would have been impossible to bestow upon the youth, and its effect was plainly shown in the sudden straightening of the lithe form, the proud toss of the head, and the flash of the black eyes that fairly scintillated in the semi-darkness of the night.

"Wal, we're all together ag'in—thet ar, all 'cept my daddio, Sampson, an' he'll turn up soon, yer may depend. An' thet ar quare critter as goes cavortin' arter you, Mister Avenger—an' the lar lumberin' arter Now, yer all knows. I hain't no curiosity, nor never hain't none, but dam my cats, or b'ars either, ef I jest couldn't like to know who she ar, or whar she kem from."

"Perhaps you may learn sooner than you think for," replied he whom we know as the Avenger. "I must find her again before I leave this place. It is strange that she should be hunting so eagerly for me, while I am doing the same in regard to her."

"Well, es I tote yur," said the old bear-tamer, "she seemed monstrous anxious to find ye, an' I'll bet, my hull kit ur b'ars ag'in a litter ur perrainy dongs thet she'll turn up clost about hyer afore long."

"But is her presence necessary to our proceeding with the business we have in hand?" impatiently asked Alfred Badger.

"To what do you allude?" asked the Avenger.

"To the rescue of her known as Silver Tongue from the Indian village. From what I have learned, both from uncle Grizzly and my Indian brother here, I am led to believe—in fact to know—that she is white, that she has not a drop of Indian blood in her veins, and her place, therefore, is with those of her own race."

The young hunter spoke as though he was in earnest. A faint smile stole over the face of the bear-tamer, and there was a mischievous look in his eye, as he said, addressing the unknown hunter:

"Yur see, the boyee knows what it ar to be a pris'ner 'mong them imps, an' he's afeared the gal mout 'at heart ef they finds out es how she's white. That's all, ain't it, lad?"

Even Leaping Elk could not entirely restrain a smile at the old hunter's ready solution of the seemingly difficult problem.

"Come, come, now, uncle Grizzly," said Alfred, slightly confused; "you know it is not fair to—"



her!" said the man, in a voice husky with emotion.

"Rosa, Rosa!" he called, "don't you know me—Richard Hammond, the only brother of your husband Jason?"

"No—no—no," she whispered, looking wildly at him, but drawing back, as if terrified, "it can't be."

"Yes—it is—I am he—I am Richard, look at me; my beard has grown since you last saw me, but look, look!"

And he bowed his forehead, and thrust his face close to hers, scanning her countenance, as she scrutinized his.

"Time has made great changes, but I can see the face of Rosa there. It is not so strange that you did not recognize me, but it is unaccountable that I failed to know you."

"You look like Jason," she added, still intently surveying him, and speaking to herself; "yes, there was a resemblance; it must be—it must be!"

"Of course it is," he added, placing one arm about her neck, and tenderly kissing her cheek; "for years we have been so near each other, without once dreaming of our relationship. Let us sit down and talk over the sad, sad past."

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 52.)

## The Ocean Girl: OR, THE BOY BUCCANEER.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST,  
AUTHOR OF "CRUISE CRUISE," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XXVIII—CONTINUED.

In a couple of hours, the thirty had agreed to do the deed; possessing themselves of the jolly-boat, they might escape with some hope.

The boatswain remained with his back leaning against the mast, smoking, and occasionally moistening his lips with brandy and water, which was given out once a day.

He already chuckled over the probable success of his plot.

It was not his intention to be picked up by any large vessel or man-of-war. They would all be guilty of mutiny, and punishable accordingly. It was, therefore, his resolve to piratically seize some small vessel, and enter boldly on a lawless career, too common at the time of which we speak.

The police of the high seas were carelessly kept, and the existence of many secret bays and coves, now well known, but then secret and retired, gave every facility to the lawless and reckless.

The great majority of the crew slept. To them this was by far the most agreeable way of passing the time.

Two men sufficed to steer the raft.

The boat was ahead about fifty feet, attached by a long rope, which lashed the water tolerably taut, but really doing very little service. The little vessel seemed to tug on, impatient of restraint, as if eager for liberty.

The boatswain was impatient of delay, but to face the officers in daylight would have been dangerous, had he attacked them openly.

It was about an hour before sundown, and the sea was agitated. Long billows lifting the raft, and making the men cling as it ascended and descended the slope, indicated that the vast ocean had at no great distance been much disturbed.

The sun appeared to go down angrily in a bank of clouds; and darkness lay on the face of the deep.

Then a man slipped gently into the water, and, guided by the towing-rope, took his way in the direction of the long-boat.

Any one used to his figure, would at once have recognized Dirtrick.

### CHAPTER XXIX.

#### THE ATTACK ON THE LONG-BOAT.

An hour passed; the sailors ate their frugal suppers, and then, after a careless look around, they lay down again to slumber, or sat in groups conversing, chiefly as to the state of the weather.

There was, however, one group, more numerous and careful, which by common consent had separated itself from the others.

It was easily supposed that this was the band of the boatswain.

They were all armed with knives or hand-spikes—the officers in the long-boat having secured all the fire-arms.

But as they were about to attempt a surprise, this mattered not.

Most likely those in the long-boat slept heavily.

At last the signal was given, and stealthily the whole body glided into the water, thanks to the darkness, without discovery.

But there was a marked difference in the trim of the raft, which was for a moment somewhat loosened.

It was so dark that nothing could be seen but the distant sail of the long-boat.

This the men took for a guide, and every now and then they lifted their eyes, to see that they were going in the right direction.

The boatswain, a powerful swimmer, kept ahead, supported by one of his fellows, the man who had collected the gang.

"I say, Thompson," said the boatswain, suddenly, "where's the boat?"

"I don't see it," hurriedly replied the other, "what's up?"

"There she is," cried the boatswain—"by Heaven, she is making off! She has slackened the rope. We are tricked!"

But at this moment the boat went round, and came dashing in their direction.

"Now, then, all at once!" cried the boatswain; "spare them not!"

The long-boat, with all sail set, was now coming up close to them, and as it dashed into their midst, every hand was stretched out to seize the gunwale.

Then came a sudden volley, and with a wild shriek the mutineers sunk into the water, wounded, dying or terrified.

The boatswain succeeded in grasping the prow of the boat, and in hitching himself half in, as yet un wounded.

"No, you don't," said Dirtrick, raising a handspike; "you're not wanted."

"Is you betraying us?" gasped the boatswain; and dextrously avoiding the blow, he dragged the faithful sailor into the water.

They sunk together—for one moment only, when they again appeared on the surface, clutching one another in a desperate death grip.

Both had knives and both swam admirably; but they were compelled to let go their hold, for fear of sinking.

Then striking at one another with one hand, while supporting themselves with the other, they each sought a vital part.

"Take care, Dirtrick!" said one of the sailors in the boat; "I'll shoot him."

The boatswain turned involuntarily, and seizing his opportunity, the faithful follower of Ned Drake struck him a blow which effectually closed the struggle. He sunk to rise no more.

The survivors of the rebels now turned toward the raft.

The long-boat pursued its way until it was close upon the raft, upon which the wildest confusion prevailed.

"What means this dastardly outrage?" cried the menacing voice of the captain.

"We don't know, sir," said the gunner, respectfully, "no more than you."

"It was the boatswain's gang," He meant to leave you all, after murdering us," continued the captain; "be careful, as I must leave you!"

"Don't leave us!" cried a dozen voices; "we will watch them."

"My men," said the captain, "I have made up my mind, that as a British sailor, I am bound to stick to you, and mean to do so—that is, if you continue worthy of it. There must, however, be no more mutiny, no more attempts at violence. We have a fearful and dangerous journey before us. If once the raft were abandoned, your fate would be dreadful—therefore, I say, be careful. If there are any traitors among you, denounce them. I shall know what to do."

The sail, which had been lowered during this conference, was again hoisted, and in a few minutes the rope was again attached to the boat. All resumed their old positions, except that seven or eight men were missing.

The sharks, doubtless, could have given an account of them.

For some days things went on very quietly, but the weather began to change gradually. It became intensely cold, and, on the third day, they were visited by a severe snow-storm.

Fast and heavy it fell, in huge, feathery flakes, upon the crouching figures of the men, who began to give way to utter desolation of heart. It hid the boat from the raft, and the raft from the boat; it muffled all sound, it mantled the sails with a white cloak of pure, unsullied color, and accumulated in mounds and ridges over the covering bodies.

The wind was light, but it was fair.

It was quite certain that they had drifted too far to the southward, and must now make all the northing they could to reach a warmer climate.

It must be remembered that they were on the other side of the Line, and that the further they went to the southward the colder it became.

Nothing but the regular allowance of rum and brandy sustained them.

Hitherto no effort had been made to exceed the regular ration, the stern threat of the captain ringing in their ears.

Now, however, the men began to murmur, and to demand double rations. The officers peremptorily refused.

Low murmurs arose on all sides, and men were heard muttering the most fearful and sanguinary threats against their superiors.

The petty officers grew alarmed, and quietly seated themselves, hauling on the rope until the boat loomed, huge and ghastly, close to them.

"What is the matter?" said a muffled voice from the boat.

"The men insist on having double rations of rum," replied the gunner. "They can stand the cold no longer."

"Give them double rations," coldly replied the old captain.

The men gave a loud cheer, and stood up in the cold, while the petty officers distributed the fiery liquid in pannikins.

There being eleven petty officers, the distribution was soon finished.

"Are they satisfied?" continued the stern voice of the captain.

"Quite satisfied, your honor," was the reply; "only the tubs are empty."

"Exactly!" sarcastically observed the captain, "and will remain so while mutiny is rife. There will be no grog to-morrow."

There was at this a great cry, but it availed nothing, as the boat once more headed them.

All that night the men huddled together under the spare sails which had been provided, and thus they were tolerably warm, especially as the snow lay thickly over all.

At daybreak the fall ceased, and a warm breeze restored hope somewhat to them. They had providentially escaped any severe storm.

But provisions and water began to fail them, while the distribution of rum, brandy and wine was necessarily small.

They were, however, evidently getting into a warmer latitude.

But salt meat, little water, and a small allowance of bread began to tell upon them; scurvy broke out suddenly and violently, carrying off no less than a dozen on the first day.

"It's all up with us," said one of the principal malcontents, as the bodies were heaved into the sea.

"Why?" exclaimed several voices.

"Don't you see them gentlemen yonder?" replied he, pointing to some horn-like points that rose from the water on all sides.

"What are they?"

"Sharks. We shall all be food for them soon."

"Better make them food for us," said the boy, laughing.

Without another word, he sought out and found a large hook, to which he fastened a good-sized piece of pork. The cord to which the hook was attached was then hitched on to one of the masts, and the bait cast into the sea.

The sharks, however, swam at a respectful distance, in a regular line of battle, as if sure of their prey.

About an hour later, however, a great splash was heard in the water, the cord was taut, and the raft shook all over.

"Heave away, my hearties! here is a prize!" cried the delighted boy, and in ten minutes more a huge shark was tossing and kicking on the raft, with such violence as to drive off all from its neighborhood.

There is no animal more tenacious of life than this huge fish, and it was only by a dextrous motion that its tail was cut off, and then it lay quiet and bled to death.

A fire was soon made on the center of the raft, on some iron plates belonging to the old galley, and the shark, broiled and roasted, was by no means a disagreeable supper. All who were ill from scurvy enjoyed a slight respite.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### LAND HO!

But again all was gloom.

They advanced with the slowness of a funeral procession; getting into pleasanter and warmer latitudes, it is true, but utterly unable to make out their whereabouts.

Water was out.

Even in the long-boat there was scarcely a drop for the ladies.

Symptoms of insanity began to show themselves amid the crew, who eyed one another in a strange and ominous manner.

It was quite certain that should starvation reach the acme, the last fearful resource of humanity would be adopted.

There was cannibalism in their eyes.

On board the long-boat things were little better. The officers had, certainly, by means of their steward, received on board some of their own private stores, but already one lady and a midshipman had perished.

All were sad and gloomy. The horizon was swept every five minutes, in vain. No friendly sail came in sight.

They had been twenty-seven days at sea, and the hearts of all began to sink within them. They were now in a warm region, and the want of water was all the more severely felt by every one.

The women were merely the skeletons of their former selves; their faces were pale, haggard and wan. Few complained. The hour for noisy ejaculation had not yet come—in a word, they were not yet mad!

It has been well said that, in a civilized country, "hunger any man can conceive, but thirst none." With every convenience for assuaging the most natural of all human sensations, we can not realize to ourselves the torturing agony which arises from the want of water.

Here they were doubly tried, for, in the words of the homely poet, it was—

"Water, water, everywhere,  
But not a drop to drink."

Agonized glances were cast on the sky—hopeless looks stood clasp the mast; and yet no hope.

Including the mutineers shot during the attempt to capture the long-boat, forty-seven men had been cast into the deep.

What remained for the others but to lie down and die?

"Land ho!"

This cry, from one of the midshipmen who had clambered to the foot of the spirit-sail, caused everybody to spring to their feet.

A low, dark line on the horizon became clearly visible.

What hope again rose in the bosoms of all, who can tell?

It was just as a reprieve under the very gallows-tree.

The long-boat was at once cast off from the raft, and all set sail in the direction of it, toward the ocean El Dorado.

Those on the raft uttered curses both loud and deep; but they availed not. The long-boat was scudding like some huge bird of the ocean, over the surface of the waters, in the direction of what was doubtless some island in the midst of deep waters.

The mirage in the desert, when thirsty travelers, dying from want, behold a kind of lake, and rush forward to find it but a mist, never excited more hope than did this little plot of land.

It was only four miles off, and yet did it seem a hundred, such was the impatience of the voyagers.

The long-boat was soon lost to view, except when something white, like the wings of a sea-gull, flitted on the ocean.

Slowly and sadly the raft was impelled by sail and oar.

Swiftly and eagerly sped the long-boat. Soon did its hopeful denizens behold welcome trees upon the land; trees that spoke, loud-tongued, of moisture—of water!

There was loud rejoicing on board the long-boat; everybody was again hopeful—even the women forgot their sufferings.

The land was so low that they were upon it almost before they were aware of it, the striking of the bows first warning them of its unexpected proximity.

"A coral reef, by George!" said the experienced captain.

Those who were only tyros in navigation knew the full extent of this exclamation.

A coral reef, and therefore an island without water.

And yet many of these extraordinary islands are inhabited by a small population, which make their perpetual residence.

How this happened we may shortly explain; that is, in another narrative.

"But the cocoa-nuts!" said a sailor.

No more was said. Everybody strong enough leaped on shore, and with ax and cutlass began to slash at the trees, half a dozen of which soon lay upon the ground.

The nuts were wildly plucked from the trees, and opened. Everybody had one for him and herself.

Here was both meat and drink!

Those on the raft were not forgotten. As soon as the first rage of hunger was appeased, four sailors, with an ample supply of the kindly fruit, one of nature's choicest blessings, were sent to the raft, the occupants of which received the boon with deep gratitude at first, and then with joyous shouts.

Two hours later they were all ashore on the reef.

It was a little more.

One of those extraordinary mountains which rise so miraculously from the unknown depths of the sea, had rescued them from death.

But it was only a temporary boon.

The whole of the vegetation of the island would not keep them a week.

But that was quite sufficient to cure all of the scurvy, which was decimating them: a disease now only known on board a few Scotch ships of inferior quality.

The captain, however, now knew where he was, and publicly announced to the men that in five days more they would be on their native shore.

This of itself was enough to cheer and rouse the spirits of men who, like all British sailors, were much more easily moved to mirth and merriment than to sadness.

It was, however, differently fated; for man proposes, but Providence disposes.

At the end of a week, and just when about to set sail at break of day, a ship startled them by appearing in the offing, not four miles distant.

The recumbent cocoa trees were soon brought into use, and a huge bonfire was made.

Five minutes after, a gun responded to the signal, and the tall ship, a three-master, hove to.

As they approached, they at once saw that it was a man-of-war, and, thank heavens! an English man-of-war.

Sir Stephen Rawdon smiled grimly. He could not help thinking that, however humane and courteous the captain might be, he would rather have rescued anybody else than an Admiral.

He determined, therefore, to be very reserved in his communications.

A midshipman who steered, and across whose mind some similar ideas had floated, completely spoiled his good intentions.

"Boat ahoy!"

"Ay, ay!" replied the midshipman.

"What boat?"

"Flag!" continued the midshipman.

Sir Stephen bit his lip; the other officers stifled a laugh.

"Now, my jokers," said a petty lieutenant, astonished at so big an announcement from the long-boat of a wreck, "no skylarking. Make proper answer. What boat is that?"

"Flag!" again said the boy, grinning.

Sir Stephen Rawdon, Admiral of the China seas!

In five minutes more the miraculously saved officer was on the deck, and in command.

His flag was hoisted at the main, amid the loud cheers of the men, and the sincere congratulations of the officer whose authority was thus superseded.

As a rule, there is no more generous or unselfish being than the British sailor. The only Indian with all on board had been reported at the Cape, but no promotions had been made in consequence.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 79.)

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## BY C. D. CLARK.

bought my father's estates after he had ruined himself by excesses. The man has a wicked heart, and we must be careful."

"I wish you could have trapped the scoundrel, boys," said Warren. "It was that black fiend, Tom Furniss. Who have you got there? Hold up your head, you

As he covered the heart of the young captain steadily, the Whig freed his bridle by a sudden twitch, and, pulling hard upon it, caused his horse to rear. It was well he

feeling certain that the bear had gone  
round the hill, and not over it, we separ-  
ated, with an understanding where to meet  
Ralph taking the left and I the right hand

They were evidently fierce with hunger and ready for any thing. The long, hard winter just passed had been a trying one on

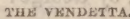
transports Monday, played Tuesday night  
was declared bankrupt Wednesday morn-  
ing, and Thursday afternoon the leader went  
to sawing wood at four shillings a cord.

## The Storm of the Devil's Head 25

On the 22d of February, 1661, the government summoned a Court of Assistants

with additional aid, but in the mean time the regicides had escaped into the wood with which the town was surrounded.

(Concluded next week.)



## Among the Wolves.

BY CAPT. BRUIN ADAMS

At the foot of a rocky eminence, where the earth was completely covered with loose rocks and gravel, we lost the sign. Feeling certain that the bear had gone round the hill, and not over it, we separated, with an understanding where to meet. Ralph taking the left and I the right hand.

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